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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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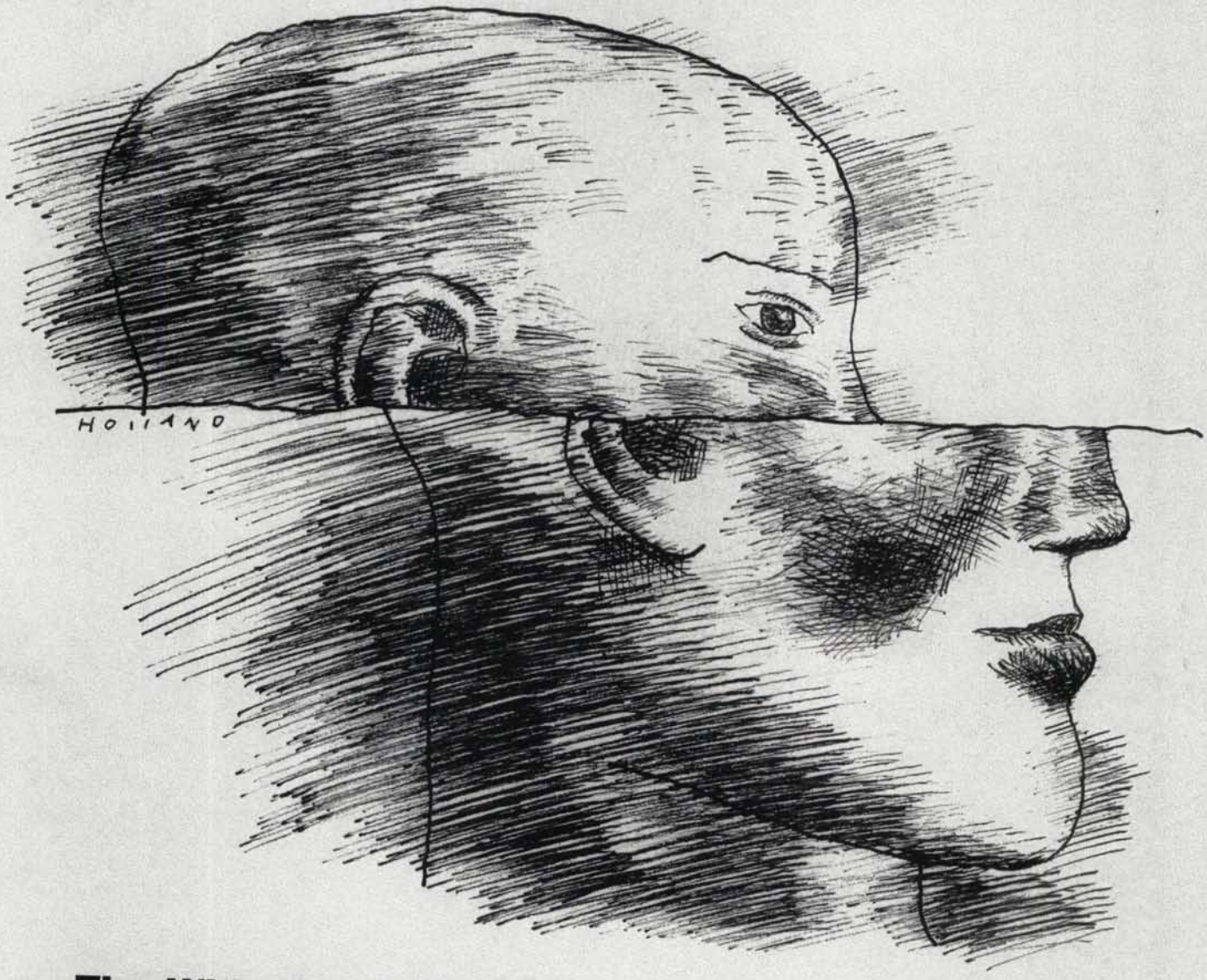

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DECEMBER 30, 1996

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CORRESPONDENCE

Bill is due

To the editors:

In high-school geometry I learned that the following syllogism was poor logic: (1) Nothing is better than a big, juicy steak; and (2) Bread crumbs are better than nothing. Ergo: (3) Bread crumbs are better than a big, juicy steak.

Can Michael Kelly's inaugural column ("Our Hero," December 2) seriously expect we "little pea-head" liberals to accept his logic, which I reconstruct as follows: (1) Liberalism, if it is anything, is Clintonism; and (2) Clintonism, if it is anything, is Clinton. Ergo (unstated conclusion): (3) Liberalism is Clinton.

The conclusion is wrong because the premise is false; replace "liberalism" with "political expediency" in that premise and I'd accept the conclusion. This election year, many of my pea-headed liberal friends felt compelled to follow Bob Dole's advice and cast a vote for which we'd be proud. For us, Ralph Nader, sanctimonious as he can be, was the only alternative. We know we are an often unheard minority in the country. Should we assume, given Kelly's smug tone, that we will be at TNR now, too?

NATHAN TESKE
Miami, Florida

To the editors:

According to Michael Kelly, President Clinton is "a shocking liar," "breathtakingly cynical" and "an opportunist of such proportions that the only thing that exceeds his reach is his grasp." Kelly's bill of particulars in support of these claims includes this complaint against Clinton:

He is "a man who signed the Republican bill ending welfare as a federal entitlement, and then asked Democrats to vote him back into office on the grounds that only he could fix the wrong he had done."

Leaving aside Kelly's childish paraphrase, Kelly accuses Clinton of having signed a bill he regarded as imperfect, then proposing to correct the parts of the bill he did not like. Kelly may well have a better idea for how Clinton should have handled the welfare bill, but can one possibly justify invective so startling on the basis of particulars like this?

It's not a good sign when one seeks psychiatric explanations for things that one reads in THE NEW REPUBLIC's pages. But where else is one to look to explain childish ranting like this?

BOB SOMERBY
Baltimore, Maryland

To the editors:

While it seems TRB has been missing many perceptive observations I enjoyed reading over a number of years, Michael Kelly's column on "Our Hero" steps over the edge into stupidity.

Clinton vetoed late-term abortion restrictions because he thought the mother's health should be considered. To assume grubby politicians should be deciding proper medical procedures, rather than doctors and their patients, shows new depths of irresponsibility.

Does Kelly really think that if Clinton were not elected Dole would fix welfare reform? Does he think that if Clinton had vetoed the reform bill, passed by a bipartisan majority, the next Congress would have done a better job of dealing with a program that stopped working years ago?

While I agree he was wrong on Medicare, whether Clinton should have taken Harold Ickes into his confidence about his choice of chief of staff and how much he cheats on his golf game is way too inside the Beltway for me.

A few other things happened over the last four years that need to be considered. Clinton showed amazing courage in standing up to his entire Democratic constituency and fighting like a dog to get NAFTA passed, and a GATT treaty. He got the Family Leave Act passed. His first budget convinced Wall Street long-term bonds were a great investment, leading to a reduction in interest rates of more than 300 basis points. He shut down the war in Bosnia, when no other person in the world could have done it and dealt with the mess in Haiti.

This was not left-liberalism or progressivism, or conservatism (neo- or otherwise). It seemed like pragmatism to me. It was policy that worked.

JOHN PATRICK ORMSBEE
Corona del Mar, California

Nice to know you

To the editors:

While Richard Rorty is entitled to his own skewed views, he misleads the reader with his put-down of the tradition of analytic philosophy in his review of Ray Monk's biography of Bertrand Russell ("Knowledge and Acquaintance," December 2). While Rorty is correct to note that many Anglophone philosophers raise doubts about two central claims held by Russell, namely that (1) logic is the essence of philosophy, and (2) genuine knowledge rests on a simple direct knowing by acquaintance, he overlooks a major legacy of analytic philosophy, namely its demand for clarity, rigor and argument, which were so often lacking in earlier philosophical discourse. Many wrote in a manner that the late Cambridge don C.D. Broad characterized as "sawdust mixed with glue."

Now clarity in philosophy may not be everything, but it is not nothing. Indeed the very challenges to the central claims of such thinkers as Russell and Ayer have been plausible because they have been made in clear, argued form by such analytic philosophers as Carl Hempel and Willard Quine. Indeed Rorty's own views have gained what plausibility they possess not simply because of his vision but rather because his arguments are put forward in fairly clear English.

It is remarkable that Rorty expresses sympathy for such continental European obscurantists (CEO's) as Gadamer and Derrida who he thinks would regard analytic philosophy as "local, quaint, pointless" without considering that they may be the more apt targets of such a characterization.

CHARLES EVANS
New York, New York

Away from Holmes

To the editors:

Earl E. Pollock (Correspondence, December 9) complains that I characterized Oliver Wendell Holmes's writings as a "manifesto in support of freewheeling judicial activism." How he reached this understanding of what I wrote is baffling. The whole point of my review was to explain how (on Holmes's view), given that the grounds for decision-making—precedent, logic, principle, and so forth—are all potentially malleable, courts nevertheless reach results that are *not* arbitrary, subjective or self-serving. Holmes's opposition to judicial activism is well-known, and I don't think I said anything to imply the contrary.

LOUIS MENAND
New York, New York

Women's community

To the editors:

Hanna Rosin's "E.G.G. Heads" (December 2) touts the credentials of Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick for a Cabinet appointment, but—incredibly—indicates that she lacks the support of the women's community.

Specifically, the article states, "The widely respected Gorelick has only one problem, 'She doesn't come with the right constituency,' says a White House source. 'The women's groups don't see her as one of them.' "

Nothing could be further from the truth. The deputy attorney general served four years on the board of directors of the National Women's Law Cen-

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ter and was identified in a 1992 poll of women lawyers as one of the "top 10 role models." She was also named the Women's Bar Association's "1993 Woman Lawyer of the Year."

For these reasons and others, Gorelick was on the Coalition for Women's Appointments' "short list" for a Cabinet position in 1992, and was again on the Coalition's first list of women recommended for Cabinet positions this year.

Indeed, the "insiders bible"—*Appointments with Power*—reflects not only her support from the Coalition in 1992-93, but also states: "Two of Gorelick's most prominent supporters were her friends Marcia Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center, and Judith Lichtman, president of the Women's Legal Defense Fund."

Jamie Gorelick has been one of the brightest stars—male or female—of the first Clinton administration, and the women's community is proud to call her "one of our own." The Coalition for Women's Appointments, a coalition of sixty women's organizations, urges the president and the White House to make the best possible use of the talents of this extraordinary woman.

ANITA PEREZ FERGUSON
Chair, Coalition for Women's Appointments,
Washington, D.C.

Christian right

To the editors:

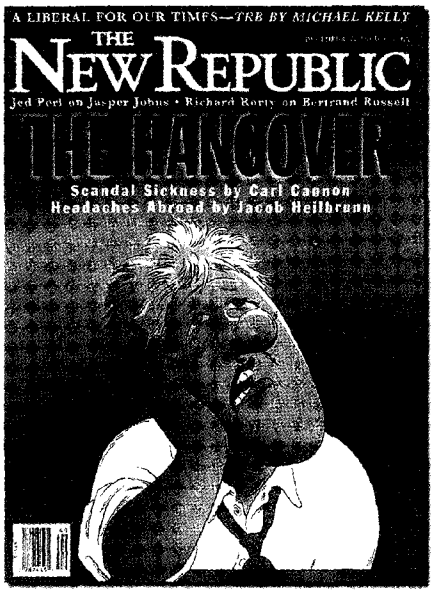
There are a few details that might round out Istvan Deak's superb article on Bosnia ("With God on Their Sides," November 25).

Most of those responsible for the revival of ugly national chauvinism in Serbia were not, in point of fact, religious. The main Serbian nationalist ideologues were either (present or former) Marxist philosophers like Mihailo Markovic and Ljuba Tadic or writers and academics like Dobrica Cosic, all of whom were firmly secular. To be sure, they were supported by the Serbian Orthodox Church hierarchy.

Slobodan Milosevic's regime clearly bears the lion's share of responsibility for the carnage in the wars of Yugoslav succession and the aggression against Croatia and Bosnia. Franjo Tudjman's authoritarian ethno-nationalist regime in Croatia was a lusty participant in the war in Bosnia and a relentless ethnic cleanser in its own right. To this date, it is refusing to permit any large-scale return of Croatian Serb refugees (who are Croatian citizens), many of whom are in Bosnia now, to their homes, which in turn makes the return of Croatian and Muslim refugees even more difficult since their homes in turn are occupied by displaced Serbs.

This is why the U.S.'s coddling of Tudjman and Milosevic makes any return of ethnically cleansed people to their homes so difficult. They will either all have the effective right to return or none will. In turn that means that NATO and the U.S. have to accept that their presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina (and Eastern Slavonia) must be for a longer duration than it was convenient to admit during the pre-election period.

Lastly, Istvan Deak is not quite right in writing that no prestigious Serb abroad ventured to remind the Belgrade government of its crimes. I have tried to do so in no less than three books (published by University of Minnesota Press), many articles in *Dissent* and op-ed pieces in *The*


A LIBERAL FOR OUR TIMES—TRB BY MICHAEL KELLY
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Jed Perl on Jasper Johns • Richard Rorty on Bertrand Russell
THE HANGOVER
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Boston Globe, The Washington Post, etc. Perhaps I am not quite a "prestigious" Serb abroad. However, I am rather active as a lecturer, writer and publicist who has criticized both the Belgrade and Zagreb authoritarian nationalist regimes and have (with increasing misgivings) supported and support an independent multicultural Bosnia. Deak's review is still superb.

BOGDAN DENITCH
New York, New York

Ballot choice

To the editors:

Contrary to your Election Notebook item (November 25), NARAL did not work to unseat former Representative Peter Torkildsen in his race with incoming Representative John Tierney. While NARAL did conduct public education campaigns in areas where constituents were unaware of their members' anti-choice positions, this was not necessary in Massachusetts' Sixth District, due to Torkildsen's pro-choice record during the 104th Congress.

The item also claims NARAL's strategy was successful in unseating "moderate" members of Congress. Members like Andrea Seastrand, Randy Tate and Fred Heineman are hardly considered moderates. They supported the 104th Congress's unprecedented attack against reproductive choice unwaveringly, including voting to eliminate the federal family planning program. It was in the districts of members like these where NARAL conducted its public education and member mobilization efforts.

KATE MICHELMAN
President, NARAL
Washington, D.C.

Familiar ring

To the editors:

I would love to see Matthew Miller's reaction if, as a patient in a hospital of the future, he rings for a nurse and a janitor appears ("Taking Our Medicine," December 2)! Of course some hospitals have some excess staff in some departments—a situation that exists in all large organizations. However, personnel reductions of the wrong sort not only jeopardize the efficacy of complex patient treatments but can also imperil the safety and even the lives of hapless patients (not to mention other hospital workers). Unfortunately, many "cost-saving" reductions in force are made by administrators who do not understand the nature of the work done by the people they are firing and who lack the time and/or the inclination to learn before they act.

ELLEN D. YORKE
Columbia, Maryland

Grand gesture

To the editors:

I agree with Stanley Kauffmann's review of *Michael Collins* ("A Lost Leader," November 25) and appreciate that your reviewer made the effort to research the backgrounds of the film's major characters. One error, however: the British did not call for a truce "[a]fter five years of bloody action and counteraction." The sustained War for Independence began gradually in 1919; the truce came in 1921. The Easter Rising of 1916, which declared the Republic of Ireland, was designed as a grand sacrificial gesture and made no pretense of being the launch of a guerrilla war.

ROBERT ST. CYR
Greenlawn, New York

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FROM WASHINGTON

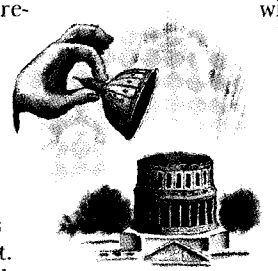
Dangerous minds

On August 13, 1996, the Board of Education in Washington voted unanimously to approve an application from Mary A.T. Anigbo to open the Marcus Garvey Public Charter School. A charter school is an oxymoron, a private school that is funded with public money—in the case of the Garvey school, District residents pay $4,000 to $6,000 per student. This year, its first in operation, the Garvey school has sixty-two students and will receive up to $372,000 of the taxpayers' money.

The board's decision to establish the Garvey school was remarkable in that the board seemed not to have the slightest idea what it was establishing. Anigbo, a self-described "clinician, psychoeducation, consultant" proposed, vaguely, to create an Afrocentric school that would require students to wear military-style fatigues and would offer instruction in such matters as "Cultural Family Retardation" and "The Destruction of Black Civilization." The board noted that it did not know: what this description of the curriculum actually meant; what Anigbo's qualifications were; "what controls, financial supervision, curricular supervision, etc. are in place;" and whether "this publicly funded charter school is employing sound practices and using non-ideological, non-polemical and non-proselytizing curricular materials." The board granted its blessing anyway. Let a hundred flowers bloom.

On December 3, the board members found out what kind of place they had established. On that day, a reporter for *The Washington Times*, Susan Ferrechio, went to the Garvey school for a story on its progress. While waiting for Anigbo, Ferrechio briefly interviewed a student. A school secretary demanded that Ferrechio show her the notepad. She refused. Mary Anigbo, accompanied by four young males, apparently students, attempted to wrest the notepad from the reporter's hands. Ferrechio resisted. A group that included the secretary and seven to eight students attacked Ferrechio, pushing and pulling at her. The assailants hit and kicked the reporter repeatedly. The principal grabbed the notepad and, with the rest of the mob, began pushing Ferrechio out of the school. They yelled racial taunts at her, including warnings to get her "white ass out of this school." At the door, the mob picked Ferrechio up and pushed her out.

Within two hours, Ferrechio returned to the school with two police officers, a black *Times* reporter named Barrington Salmon and a white *Times* photographer named Cliff Owen. Inside, Owen began taking pictures of the secretary. Principal Anigbo and other adults attacked the photographer. When the police attempted to intervene, the attackers (including Anigbo's nephew, Calvin L. Gatlin, a security guard at the school) scuffled with police. Again, Ferrechio and Owen were subjected to racial taunts.



This account is based on the assertions of Ferrechio, Owen, Salmon and the police officers, as reported in *The Washington Times* and elsewhere. Anigbo has offered a disputing account. She claims that Ferrechio stole a notepad off a counter and refused to return it, that Ferrechio hit Anigbo in the chest and grabbed her arm, that Anigbo's students naturally tried to defend her, that Ferrechio shouted racial insults at the students, telling them that she was going to "get you black people out of that building," that Ferrechio threatened the students with a knife and a can of mace. But Anigbo's account was unbelievable on its face, and was made more so by revelations this week that (1) Anigbo was, in 1986, charged with assault with a deadly weapon and carrying a deadly weapon after she attacked two female process servers with a knife (slashing one) and a small log; and (2) Anigbo's nephew, Garvey security guard Gatlin, was convicted in 1978 of armed robbery and assault with a deadly weapon (a gun), in 1984 of armed robbery, in 1989 of possession of cocaine and in 1995 of attempted unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.

After this incident, several predictable things happened. The national media showed little interest in the story. *The Washington Post* has played the story mostly inside, made no real effort to ascertain the truth of what happened, and generally treated the disputing accounts of what happened as morally and logically equal. As of December 9, none of the three major network newscasts had run a piece, nor had *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune* or *The Wall Street Journal*.

Also predictably, black political racialists have rallied behind Anigbo, blaming the whole thing on "white people" and raising the usual spectre of mob violence. In a rally on December 6, Anigbo was joined by the Reverend Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., one of the organizers of the Million Man March and Malik Zulu Shabazz, a young man who achieved notoriety at a Nation of Islam rally in 1994 in which he roused the crowd with a Jew-hating call and answer session: "Who is it that controls the media and Hollywood?" "Jews! Jews!" "Who is that has been spying on black leaders and spying on Martin Luther King and set up his death?" "Jews! Jews!"

What has not happened so far in the Garvey school affair is what most obviously should happen. There has not been much of a hue or cry against the whole idea of charter schools. This is odd, because the Garvey school affair demonstrates everything that has always been wrong with the idea. Charter schools, and similar ideas like the use of vouchers to pay for tuition in private schools, enjoy support from the right and the left for essentially the same reason. Conservatives like charter schools because they think the schools' autonomy will allow the teaching once again of conservative virtues—old-fashioned education, discipline, religious instruction. The race-and-gender left likes charter schools because autonomy will allow the teaching of *its* values: Afrocentric schools for blacks and feminist schools for girls and so on.

And this bi-ideological popularity is, as the Garvey case shows, exactly why such things as charter schools and school voucher programs cannot in the end succeed. A pluralistic society cannot sustain a scheme in which the citizenry pays for a school but has no influence over how the school is run. (And there really is no influence; the only remedy Washington school authorities have in the Garvey case is to close the school down, which is politically quite difficult.) Public money is shared money, and it is to be used for the furtherance of shared values, in the interest of *e pluribus unum*. Charter schools and their like are definitionally antithetical to this American promise. They take from the *pluribus* to destroy the *unum*. If you say that the taxpayers should support the Little Sisters of the Poor to run their private school as they see fit, without any real oversight by the elected representatives of the taxpayers, you must also say that we should pay for Mary A.T. Anigbo to run a place where black children learn that white people are their enemies, and act accordingly.

MICHAEL KELLY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 30, 1996

ALTERED STATE

"A very bold and exciting move" was how William Cohen described his own appointment as Secretary of Defense last week. Washington forgives such immodesty, especially if lightning strikes and you are without a press secretary. But we cannot share Cohen's enthusiasm, exactly. The president's new appointments in foreign affairs and national security are neither bold nor exciting, with one exception.

It will surprise none of our readers to hear that the one exception, in our view, is Madeleine K. Albright. In recent days, her elevation has been described in the prints as some sort of conspiracy between Hillary Rodham Clinton and the editors of THE NEW REPUBLIC, which is an improbable conspiracy indeed. And so we want the grounds of our enthusiasm for the Secretary of State-designate to be clear. Yes, we rejoice in the gender revolution that she represents; the frank and constructive discussions of the modalities and the instrumentalities will never be the same. But feminism would be a high price to pay for, say, isolationism. In this instance, no such price need be paid.

All you need to know about Albright's qualifications for the job may be gleaned from a list of the constituencies that are rattled by her rise. They are, briefly, the economicists, the Russophiles, the Powellites and the professional peace-processors. The economicists worry that Albright thinks too much about strategy and security and too little about markets and profits. The Russophiles note her passionate attempt to stop Serbia from destroying Bosnia (in which she was perfectly unimpeded by Russia's "historic" sympathy for Serbia) and her enthusiasm for the expansion of NATO to Russia's door. The Powellites recall grimly that in the councils of power in Bill Clinton's considerably addled first term she challenged the author of the "Powell Doctrine" with these words, reported in his memoir: "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" And the professional peace-processors, led by Albright's predecessor, know that she does not wake up in the middle of the night with a bright hope about Hafez al-Assad.

What's not to like? It is a remarkable bit of luck, in fact, that Bill Clinton's second appointment to the seventh floor of the State Department is not just another chapter in the domination of post-cold war foreign policy by Carterism and Carterites. Yes, we are aware that Albright started out as a Carterite in good standing. She even worked for Michael Dukakis; but we do not like guilt by association, and there is the evidence of our senses to consider. During the past four years, Albright has demonstrated her grasp of the most important fact about the world in the aftermath of the Soviet Union: when communism died, all the challenges and the threats to American values and American interests did not die with it. Capitalism is the only social and economic system standing, but the object of diplomacy is not money. Foreign policy is not trade policy, even in our brave new wired world. The rationality of markets will forever be contested by the irrationality of power. And there is no philosophical or practical reason why political development should await economic development in, say, China. The opinion that economic rights should precede political rights does not have a happy provenance in our time. And what are the rights of American merchants compared to the rights of Chinese peasants?

The good news about Albright, in sum, is that she is a creature of the twentieth century. For this reason, she understands how appallingly similar to this century the next century is likely to be. A person whose primal scene was Nazism and then Stalinism is not likely to get drunk on talk of a new millennium. She is likely to know, rather, that evil is never permanently retired, and certainly not by technological change. Albright recognized early that the most pressing order of business for Clinton's foreign policy in its first term was not protectionism, it was genocide. And a person whose primal scene was not Vietnam will know that there is only one way to stop genocide, and that is the harsh, airborne way.

As for Cohen: fine, fine. He will be perfectly competent at Defense, just as he would be perfectly competent at Energy or the United Way or PBS. It is not bipartisanship by which Cohen proceeds, it is inoffensiveness. We expect that Samuel Berger will continue Anthony Lake's policies at the NSC, which makes our Albrightism a little more desperate. This leaves Anthony Lake at the CIA, which is where he should be left. Saddling him with that betrayed institution is a perfect punishment. •

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NOTEBOOK

REWIND: The work of Nixon rehabilitators remains Sisyphean. Laboriously, they rebuild the Old Man's reputation until, inevitably, their efforts come crashing down as each new Nixon tape is released by the National Archives. The latest revelation: Nixon ordering the Internal Revenue Service to investigate "big Jewish contributors" to the Democratic Party, whom he later accuses of "stealing in every direction." Happy Hanukkah, Dick, wherever you are.

OUT OF STOCK: Occasionally there appears in Congress an anti-hero so bizarre that when he is finally ejected you don't know whether to cheer or sigh. This year there were two: elder statesman Bob Dornan and maniac-in-training Steve Stockman. Stockman, a junior college dropout who lived on a bench in Fort Worth until he found God, had a special relationship with Larry Pratt, whose minglings with the Aryan Nation embarrassed even Pat Buchanan. Pratt, according to *Roll Call*, functioned as a "shadow congressman," filling in for the Texan at private House meetings. Last week, in a special election, Stockman lost to an earnest tax accountant. The Hill is sure to be a duller, if saner, place.

SOUND OF SILENCE: "There is news worth celebrating on the popular-culture front," Bill Bennett announced last week in a *New York Times* op-ed written with DeLores Tucker of the National Political Congress of Black Women. Bennett, whose descriptions of America's moral ethos often sound like entries under the thesaurus listing "cesspool," has rattled conservative allies by suggesting corporations may indeed bear some responsibility for this state of affairs. Now, though, he's found a company to celebrate: Wal-Mart. Bennett and Tucker laud the retail giant for refusing to stock CDs that contain "objectionable" lyrics or cover art, thus "creating market pressure to elevate the quality and standards of what is being sold to children." Of course, Bennett's paean doesn't mention what Wal-Mart sold *from* children—Kathie Lee Gifford's clothing line, produced for years in Honduran sweatshops. And, while Wal-Mart righteously refuses to sell *music* that glorifies guns, it is perfectly happy to sell guns. The stores even sold handguns over the counter until 1994, when the company was sued by relatives of a Texas man who shot his parents with a Wal-Mart purchase. Now Wal-Mart only offers them by mail-order. Singer Sheryl Crow evoked the incident in a recent song ("Watch our children as they kill each other with a gun they bought at the Wal-Mart discount stores"). But don't look for Crow's anti-violence album in Wal-Mart stores. They don't stock it—it's too objectionable.

BAD TIMES: Why doesn't *The Washington Times* get more respect? Well, look at how it handled the recent "scandal" of Martha Pope, senior aide to U.S. Irish peace negotiator George Mitchell. A few weeks ago two European tabloids, the *Mail on Sunday* out of London and the *Sunday World* of Dublin, published allegations that Pope had an affair with Gerry Kelly, an important member of Sinn Fein and a former IRA man. Though both parties categorically denied the story, and there was no proof of its veracity, it leapt effortlessly over the Atlantic, landing on the front page of not only *The New York Post*, but also of *The Washington Times*, which postures as a more respectable rag. The latter ran a cheap we're-just-passing-on-someone-else's-news story, along with a photo of Pope, also on the front page. The *Times* then dove lower, running a column by staff writer John McCaslin, who opened by citing Pope's statement that she had never even met Kelly. "Perhaps not," McCaslin wrote, "although we're told on good authority that Miss Pope, who joined Mr. Mitchell's staff in 1980 ... and House Democratic Whip David E. Bonior, the unabashed liberal elected last month to his 11th term, were once romantically linked." McCaslin goes on to bash Bonior for becoming romantically involved with and marrying *another woman*, on his staff. It's sometimes said that, because the *Times* is owned by the Moonies, the liberal elite could never take it seriously, even if it were to practice responsible journalism. The proposition remains subjunctive.

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY: According to Joseph Epstein, writing in the Christmas books issue of *The Weekly Standard*, literature is all about revenge. All the greats have turned real-life friends and enemies into fictional insects—Dostoevsky, Lawrence, Waugh, Hemingway ... and Joseph Epstein. Epstein announces that he, too, once succumbed, in a story called "Another Rare Visit with Noah Danzig," about a world-famous Chicago novelist with a taste for women and good clothes. He muses: "Is it a good story? I think that it is at least an amusing one." Well, it is not a good story. But it is at least a revealing one. Epstein is coy in the *Standard*. He won't tell us the name of this writer, nor the actual casus belli—apparently "an act of frivolous disloyalty on his part." But an unwilling second glance at "Another Rare Visit with Noah Danzig" identifies both the novelist—Saul Bellow—and the reason for Epstein's ire: in it, Epstein's alter ego is sore because the Bellow figure turned him into a fictional insect in one of his novels—the loathsome Morty Feldman in *Hochfelder's Revenge*. Epstein's character whines: "Maybe twenty or thirty people in the world would ever know that I was the model for Morty Feldman in *Hochfelder's Revenge*.... What I couldn't get over was the sense of betrayal. A wretched little hustler, a blind fool on the make, a full-out creep, was this what Noah Danzig thought of me during the many (I had until now thought) comradely afternoons we had spent in each other's company?" In the *Standard*, Epstein wants us to believe that his story takes revenge on Bellow. It sounds as if Bellow once took revenge on Epstein, and is still taking it. •

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BELGRADE POSTCARD

UNSTRUNG HEROES

By Anna Husarska

The fact that the first martyr of Serbia's Protest '96 is a puppeteer is telling. Dejan Bulatovic and his foam puppet made their first appearance at the demonstrations on Friday, December 6. Two days later, his mother said she found him naked and beaten on the floor of a prison cell.

Bulatovic had been parading a life-size effigy of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. The blond hairdo was unmistakable. The costume was wishful thinking: a prison uniform numbered 17111996 (the date of the second round of municipal elections, whose results Milosevic's party canceled when the opposition won). Every time Bulatovic saw a TV camera, he waved his stuffed Slobo eagerly. Foreign journalists loved him.

Bulatovic is as good a symbol as any of a revolt that is largely dependent on the young, the urban, the intellectual. Every day at noon, students protesting the vote-stealing set off on their march from the philosophy faculty courtyard. They then perform some kind of political performance art: they build a brick wall in front of the Parliament, try to present Milosevic with a cake, cover the building that houses the state wire service, Tanjug, with old newspapers. The most committed have just enough time to rush back to Terazije Square for the bigger, grown-up demonstration, which starts at 3:30.

Workers, a vital presence in many of the dictatorship-toppling rallies of 1989, are scarcely in evidence here. Some three dozen metal factory employees carry "TRADE UNION INDEPENDENCE" flags. That is all. This absence is perhaps to be expected: after years of sanctions, economic mismanagement and mega-inflation, Serbia's factories are operating at minimal capacity. The people are pauperized, dependent on meager state handouts they don't want to lose. But without the workers, Protest '96 may be doomed.

As surprising as the absence of the workers is the presence, in good numbers, of Belgrade's pensioners, who, with their proper dress and genteel ways, add an old world air to the events. At one of last week's protests, I chatted with a couple in their late 70s. He used a walking stick, and wore a Fellinesque corduroy hat; she was draped in a long but not ostentatious fur coat, her white hair gathered in a little net. They spoke French. I walked with them as we approached the Serbian Radio and Television building, one of the regular stops on the protest route. When we got there, Madame began vigorously shaking her key ring. Given that a few thousand people were whistling and blowing all sorts of horns and noise-making gadgets, her gesture of protest was charmingly ineffectual. Monsieur, meanwhile, fiddled with a piece of paper in his cold-stiffened hands, trying to make an airplane (the protesters' order of the day was to "attack with paper aircraft").

I have done the loop three days in a row and every time I have the same strange feeling. On the one hand: it is deeply inspiring to see all these Serbs vent their anger. You can almost feel the catharsis. On the other hand: Where were those 150,000 people when their leader was instigating in their name the worst barbarities in Europe since the Holocaust? Why, except for a small group of peaceniks around Vesna Pesic (one of the leaders of an opposition coalition), did they not register their protest then? It wasn't all that hard to find out what was happening: the opposition weekly *Vreme* reported honestly and thoroughly on the war and its aftermath, as did the daily *Nasa Borba* and the television station "Studio B," until Milosevic took it over last February.

The other demonstrators provoke even more somber thoughts. Mostly middle-aged Serbs, they brandish the national flag, wave three fingers in the Serbian salute and wear military-cum-national paraphernalia. Perhaps these are only symbols, but it was under symbols like these that much of Bosnia's ethnic cleansing proceeded. And while it would be nice to imagine the demonstrators are reclaiming them from the killers, the reality is that none of these people demonstrated beneath flags when the Serbs massacred as many as 8,000 men from Srebrenica, and, even today, one searches in vain for a placard that mentions Slobo's crimes in Bosnia or, for that matter, Kosovo.

Then there is the question of what the demonstrators can reasonably hope to accomplish. The Serbian president has surrounded himself with yes-men, and he trusts and consults only his wife, Mirjana Markovic, a femme who is almost certainly more fatale than her husband. She heads the United Yugoslav Left, or JUL party, which despite its abysmal approval rating among voters still controls the majority of Serbian ministries. The most popular song of Protest '96 is the one about the hated Mirjana, a ditty called "Baba Jula"—the witch from Jul.

Until now, Milosevic has managed to ignore the protests. But how long will he be able to do so? And what will he try next?

Tanks can probably be ruled out; the events of Christmas '89 in Bucharest, during which an imperial couple much like he and Mira went before the execution squad, is vivid in Milosevic's memory. Face-saving concessions like restoring some of the opposition's electoral victories seemed a real possibility a week ago, but after the Serbian Supreme Court upheld the annulment of the elections, that solution has faded. The two sides in these daily confrontations may be trying to outwait each other. But it is Milosevic who has time on his side. After all, General Winter is in his ranks: as temperatures regu-

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larly drop below freezing, the demonstrations are likely to run out of steam before Milosevic gets the message.

The outside world could still punish Milosevic, but Russia is a stumbling block. At a conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on December 3, Moscow managed to block any condemnation of the Serbian regime for canceling the election results. And without Russian support, it's unlikely that the U.N. Security Council will reimpose economic sanctions on Serbia.

For their part, the Belgrade demonstrators place great faith in the U.S. and especially in its new nominee for Secretary of State. Madeleine Albright, they're sure, will get tough with Milosevic. For one thing, Albright was once on the receiving end of stones thrown at her by Serbians (in Vukovar, March 1996) so she may have some rare insider's understanding of the whole situation. But more than that, the Belgrade hopeful say, Albright has the right personality for the task. They say that she is a "*baba sa jajima*," which she herself would probably translate as "a lady with cojones."

Editor's note: Anna Husarska was in Yugoslavia as a political analyst for the International Crisis Group.

The CPI changes and Washington quakes.

REVOLUTION OF '96

By Jonathan Chait

For years, congressional deficit hawks have searched in vain for a politically palatable way to cut Social Security. Their white knight has finally galloped in: Michael Boskin, who heads a congressional advisory commission that last month recommended a combined benefits cut and tax increase through a technical adjustment that the geezers back home won't notice.

The commission's fix is a cut in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the official inflation gauge. To prevent inflation from raising taxes or cutting spending, the government ties its tax brackets and benefit checks to the CPI. But Boskin claims the CPI overstates inflation by about 1.1 percent—in other words, Uncle Sam has been giving taxpayers and Social Security recipients a sweetheart deal. If Congress adopts Boskin's counsel, it could mean billions in easy deficit reduction. Shaving 1.1 percent off the CPI would save a trillion dollars in a dozen years—and move us three-quarters of the way toward solving Social Security's looming deficit.

The political beauty of the CPI adjustment is its invisibility. If we lower the CPI by 1.1 percent, then Social Security recipients would get 1.1 percent less next year than they would otherwise. That's not enough to make anybody dash off furious letters to their congressman, but it adds up. Twenty years from now, a Social Security check would be worth 25 percent less—but who's going to remember a 20-year-old vote to adjust a statistic? For political purposes, the decrease would not exist.

Exactly this sort of solution is what the Boskin Commission was designed to produce. Behind its über-geek image, the commission was a political beast from the beginning. Boskin's views, after all, were well known before his appointment. The point all along was to remove Social Security from the political process.

Instead, curiously, the report has set up a game of chicken. Republicans, burned on Medicare, insist that President Clinton endorse a CPI revision before they do. Thus far, the president has kept mum. And on the Republican side, even among the politics-be-damned, balanced-budget-loving 1995 freshman class, heroism seems suddenly in short supply. Representative Mark Neumann, who usually talks of budget balancing in quasi-religious terms, called the CPI revision "an attack on Social Security funds." He proposed instead to cut waste "like corporate welfare and sending Russian monkeys into space." (American monkeys, presumably, are still worthy of federal support.)

Why are politicians so coy about embracing such an apparently elegant and painless solution to the most vexing of issues? The answer begins with the fact that nobody is really sure Boskin is right. Newspaper accounts (which you probably skipped) treated the commission's findings as received wisdom. But 1.1 percent was a guess; the report actually suggested the CPI's bias lay somewhere between 0.8 percent and 1.6 percent. Everyone agrees on the causes of the CPI's overstatement: it can't tell the difference between a better mousetrap and one that just costs more, and when consumer goods do get pricier, the CPI doesn't account for shoppers switching to discount alternatives.

If economists could agree on how much these factors artificially pump up the official inflation statistics, those errors wouldn't be there in the first place. Most estimates suggest the bias is closer to half a percent, but some economists think it's closer to 2 percent. That range may look tiny, but in relative fact it is huge. The CPI ran at 2.9 percent last year, so a 1.1 percent bias would mean inflation is more than one-third slower than the government thinks.

The ramifications reach far beyond the budget. Economic growth counts how much more goods and services we produced this year than last. If everybody just jacked up the price for the same stuff, the economy hasn't really grown. That's why the CPI factors into economic growth. If the CPI has been overstating inflation by 1.1 percent, then the economy has grown 1.1 percent faster than we thought.

The implications of officially accepting this idea are many and mind-boggling. Rewriting the rate of inflation

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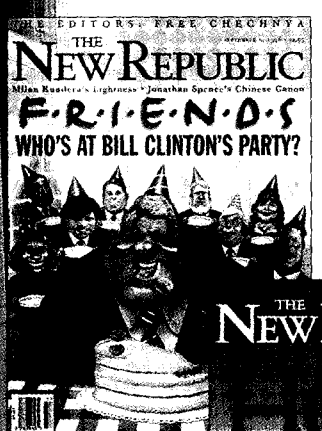

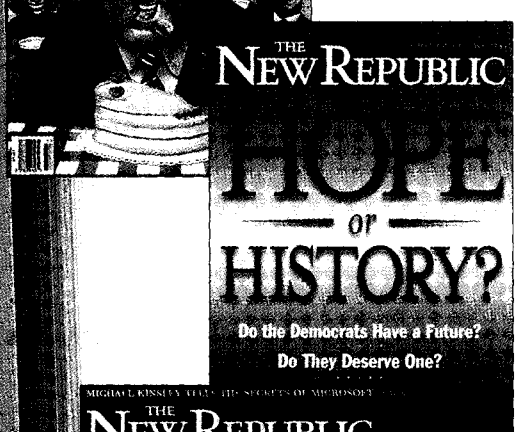

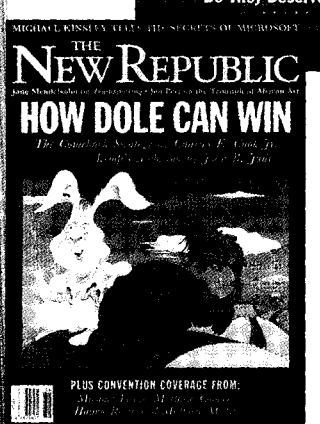

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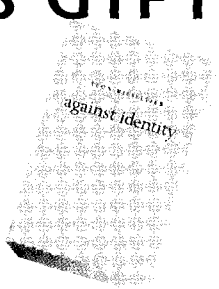

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for the past thirty years means rewriting history. It means that the idea that we live in an economy that no longer offers most people a better life tomorrow than today and a better life today than yesterday—an idea that for years has informed just about everything you have read in the newspapers and heard on the evening news about the state of the union, an idea that has dominated the last two presidential elections, an idea that has helped give rise to angry white males on one end of the spectrum and slackers on the other—why, it's all wrong.

Remember the middle-class squeeze and corresponding voter discontent that ended George Bush's career in 1992 and spawned the Buchanan Brigades in 1996? Forget it. If you recalculate with a lower inflation rate, economic growth has been just dandy. "Instead of falling by 13 percent," Boskin wrote in a recent *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, "real hourly earnings have risen by 13 percent from 1973 to 1995." And remember the "Clinton Crunch?" That was the epithet coined by the Dole campaign to describe the Clinton administration's 2.4 percent rate of economic growth. Dole promised his tax cut would boost growth to a spectacular 3.5 percent. But Boskin's adjustment of the CPI would mean that the economy under Clinton actually has grown by 3.5 percent, which means the prosperity that supply-siders promise tax cuts will deliver is occurring without tax cuts. This is a little frightening for the GOP, since the transformation of the party of Lincoln into the party of Reagan rests fundamentally on the appeal of tax-cutting.

Given ramifications of this magnitude, it is not surprising that, so far at least, many economists who favor tax cuts have been driven to distraction and hypocrisy by the very thought of the Boskin adjustment. One such economist is, of all people, Boskin. Before he was a political virgin, Boskin spent years reliably flacking for Republican economic voodoo. Yet at the time he plugged the Dole plan, Boskin had already made public his belief that the inflation rate was inflated. In September, 1995, his commission produced a preliminary report finding the same 1.1 percent bias; he'd had a full year, in other words, to cultivate an appreciation for the miracle of Clintonomics and to rethink the need for tax cuts.

A similar ambivalence afflicts certain liberal economists. Consider Lester Thurow, who last spring bemoaned falling wages in an essay for *The American Prospect*. His culprit was the Federal Reserve, which, he argued, has strangled economic growth out of a misplaced obsession with inflation. Why misplaced? Because inflation, he argued, is overstated by almost *three percentage points*. But of course if that's true, then wages haven't fallen, they've skyrocketed. If one half of his argument is right, then the other half can't be.

Which brings us to another Boskin Effect. The argument that undercuts Thurow undercuts his nemesis as well. The Federal Reserve under Alan Greenspan has premised its monetary policies on the imperative of suppressing inflation. To this end, Greenspan has argued, a certain amount of pain is necessary, and the Fed periodically administers this pain, in the form of unemployment-heightening hikes in the interest rate. But if Boskin is right, then inflation has been much lower all along than the Fed let on. And Greenspan apparently suspected this himself; he has, on more than one occasion, said he believed that the CPI overstated inflation by up to 1.5 percent.

Finally, consider one more corollary of the Boskin thesis. If the economy is really growing at 3.5 percent, then the argument for deficit reduction is much weaker. If, as a nation, you're expecting to have less money in the future—when the baby-boomers retire, say—it makes sense to save. But if you're expecting to have more money, it makes sense to go ahead and borrow. If we've been underestimating our economic growth, then borrowing from future generations no longer looks so greedy. "It would take some very peculiar logic," writes Dean Baker of the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal think tank, "to justify cutting our parents' Social Security benefits to make our kids even richer in the future."

All of which leaves this generation of politicians in a quandary. Nearly all of them base their economic worldview on one or both of the following propositions: (1) Living standards are stagnating, and (2) We as a society are spending our children's inheritance. If Boskin's commission is right, then we must abandon both these tried-and-truisms.

The battle over the CPI is shaping up as another Beltway ritual, the Test of Political Courage. But the test is not whether the president and Congress have the guts to take on a popular entitlement program. The test will come after they do so, and what it will show is whether they are honest enough to acknowledge that if the CPI is wrong then they must rethink nearly everything else they know about the economy. •

One more nail.

HISS: STILL GUILTY

By Eric Breindel and Herbert Romerstein

The death of Alger Hiss has not ended the argument about his guilt. Despite overwhelming evidence, Hiss partisans continue to insist upon his innocence. Some, to be sure, seem less confident about the old mantras. *Nation* Publisher Victor Navasky—who turned the weekly into a vehicle for Alger Hiss apologia during his tenure as editor—called Hiss "a model citizen" in a recent *Nation* obituary. But, according to an article in *The Los Angeles Times* by Martin Walker, the U.S. bureau chief for the British newspaper *The Guardian*, Navasky's position on Hiss's guilt is in flux. Navasky told Walker: "It's what exactly he [Hiss] was guilty of that still confuses me."

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Marking Time

It is almost seven years since the nation's governors and President announced a set of national education goals for the year 2000. We are now three years away from the turn of the century. How are we doing? According to "Building a Nation of Learners, 1996," the National Education Goals Report, which came out a couple of weeks ago, we haven't made much progress.

The education goals are very ambitious, but they reflect what we must strive for if our children are to get an education equal to that of students in other industrialized nations. Among them are calls for students in grades 4, 8, and 12 to demonstrate competency in nine core areas; for an increase in the high school graduation rate to 90 percent; and for "safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools."

The report is not encouraging about our meeting these goals. We have not raised the percentage of students graduating from high school or made significant improvements in student achievement. Furthermore, drug use among students is up over last year and teachers report more threats and injuries, so learning is still being compromised by schools where discipline is poor and teachers and students are not safe.

We will never achieve the national goals by continuing to do what we have always done.

Am I being impatient? I don't think so. The truth is, we will never achieve the national goals by continuing to do what we have always done. We will not get there with a fragmented curriculum and a system in which there are no consequences for success or failure. We will not get there when achieving at a seventh- or eighth-grade level is all students need to graduate from high school and when colleges and universities continue to admit these graduates in large numbers.

As the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, about which I wrote last week, confirmed, the successful school systems of our competitor nations have common curriculums, either state or national; they have agreed about what their students should know. They also have a common way of measuring student achievement to make sure that students in every school get the same high-level curriculum and teaching, and their exams have important consequences for the students. However, it is not enough for us to grab on to the idea of standards and assessments.

In fact, most states have started developing standards, but a recent AFT study found that fewer than one-third had standards in core subjects that could be the basis of a rigorous curriculum. And most states that have graduation exams still target them at an eighth- or ninth-grade level. Vague standards and easy exams may keep politicians out of hot water, but they also keep us marking time when it comes to achieving the education goals.

There is another problem, too—a scattershot approach to education reform. While states are working to come up with standards—and curriculums and assessments based on these standards—many are also "experimenting" with schemes that pull in the opposite direction. Charter schools encourage people to create their own curriculums and assessments. With vouchers, public money goes to private schools for whom state-developed curriculums and assessments are irrelevant. These schemes are very trendy, and politicians who support them are likely to get praise for being innovative, but they divert money and energy that we need to reach the education goals.

You see the same thing in the Congress. When Congress passed the Goals 2000 legislation, it established funding to encourage and help states create standards and assessments. But now Congress has gone out of its way to encourage states to spend their Goals 2000 money on technology. Why should states carry on with the tough and controversial job of setting standards when they can substitute the easy one of buying equipment? Why should politicians risk votes when they can get applause?

Congress also missed a chance to help achieve the goal of safe and disciplined schools. One answer to continuing discipline problems is alternative settings, classes for students whose behavior regularly makes it impossible for other kids to learn. But these alternative settings are expensive, and the school districts that need them most are often reluctant (or unable) to spend the money. And yet, when Congress decided it had $51 million extra to put into education, it poured the money into charter schools. This is like letting a bridge fall down because you don't want to spend money on repairs and then building a tunnel to take its place.

If we are serious about the education goals—and we should be—we have to bend all our efforts toward attaining them. It is a lot easier to do a little of this and a little of that, but as we should already see, that's not the solution to what ails our education system: it is more like the problem.

Free copies of the report are available by writing the National Education Goals Panel, 1255 22nd St., N.W., Suite 502, Washington, DC 20037, or sending an e-mail (NEGP@goalline.org). It is also available on the World Wide Web (http://www.negp.gov).

Mr. Shanker's comments appear under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address Mr. Shanker at AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker. Visit the AFT web site (http://www.aft.org).

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Maybe we can help clear up the confusion. From archives in the Czech Republic, we have secured previously unavailable documents that further confirm that Alger Hiss was a Soviet agent. The files concern Noel Field, an NKVD (later KGB) agent who served with Hiss at the State Department prior to World War II. Field and his wife were friends of Alger and Priscilla Hiss. The relationship between the two families—grounded, initially, in their shared identity as Quakers—isn't in dispute.

Field, who made little secret of his pro-Soviet orientation after leaving Washington for a League of Nations post in 1936, fled to Eastern Europe after the war. Caught up in the climate of paranoia created by Stalin's East Bloc purge trials, he was arrested in Prague in 1949. Shipped from Czechoslovakia to Hungary, the hapless Field—accused of having been "an O.S.S. controlled Anglo-Zionist spy"—was used as a "witness" in the show-trial of Hungarian Foreign Minister Lazlo Rajk. Subsequently, Field—albeit in absentia—also provided a "confession" that served as evidence in the 1952 Slansky trial, an ugly anti-Semitic affair that sent Rudolf Slansky, the General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, to the gallows.

During his 1949 interrogation in Budapest, Field named Hiss as a Soviet agent. Maria Schmidt, a Hungarian scholar, located the transcript of the interrogation several years ago in the archives of the Hungarian secret police and wrote about her discovery in these pages (see "The Hiss Dossier," November 8, 1993). Schmidt, however, wasn't allowed to make copies of the documents, which enabled Hiss apologists to cast doubt on her findings.

But we've found a summary of the 1949 interrogation in the Czech state archives. It was prepared six years later when the Czech secret police (the Ministry of National Security) re-evaluated Field's case as part of the general easing of state repression after Stalin's death. We've brought a copy to the West.

According to the summary—which was compiled after Field's release from prison and rehearses facts that the Hungarians and the Czechs had come to accept as accurate—Field and Hiss had both been Soviet agents: "Noel Field asserts that he was on friendly terms with Hiss when he worked in the Department of State, and that Hiss did intelligence work on behalf of the USSR. He claims to know this on the basis of conversations with him and that Hiss also attempted to recruit him. However, at that time Noel Field was already working for Soviet intelligence via the Massings."

The last reference supports the claims of Hedda Massing, a Soviet intelligence officer in the 1930s. In Alger Hiss's perjury trial, Massing—who'd long since abandoned communism—testified that Hiss had tried to recruit Field into his own ring. Massing said she and Hiss had even sparred on one occasion over which of them would "win" Field. Massing told the jury that Hiss wanted Field in his own espionage cell. But Field was already working for Moscow under Massing's supervision. At his trial, Hiss denied the conversation, along with any memory of ever having met Massing. The defendant also denied knowing that Field—a friend and colleague—was a Communist.

Another document we found in Prague indicates that Field's fear of returning to the U.S. was triggered by concern that he himself would be called to testify in the Hiss matter. The evidence is a handwritten declaration by Herman Field, Noel's brother. Herman Field prepared it during *his* 1949 interrogation by the Polish secret police. (Herman, who'd gone to Eastern Europe in search of his "vanished" brother, had been arrested in Warsaw.)

Questioned as to why Noel Field's wife didn't "make a lot of noise" when her husband was arrested in Prague, Herman explains that "just at the time my brother disappeared, the Alger Hiss case was starting in America." According to Herman: "If [Noel's] disappearance had become known to the American public, it would have had a very bad effect on the outcome ... because my brother had been named." Herman Field adds that "my sister-in-law ... decided, and I agreed, that the affair had to be kept secret until we had the possibility to consult with the Czech Interior Ministry."

The Czech documents come on the heels of evidence from other sources demonstrating Hiss's guilt. A March 30, 1945, NKVD message—part of the recently declassified Venona documents, U.S. government intercepts of wartime communications between Soviet agents in America and Moscow—reports a meeting between NKVD officer Ishkak Akhmerov and an agent code named "Ales." "Ales" is described as having worked for Soviet military intelligence since 1935. Chambers, of course, testified that Hiss had served the GRU (military intelligence) beginning in 1935. "Ales," it seems, was the leader of a small espionage group that included his family members. Chambers had identified Hiss's wife and brother as members of Alger's cell. "Ales" worked at the State Department, attended the Yalta conference and went on to Moscow from Yalta. Hiss, a member of Washington's Yalta delegation, was one of just four State Department officials who traveled from the Big Three summit to Moscow. Neither Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius Jr. nor the two others ever had their loyalty questioned. All in all, the footnote to the cable indicating that "Ales" is "probably Alger Hiss"—a conclusion drawn by American analysts—is an exercise in caution.

When Maria Schmidt uncovered evidence that Noel Field had incriminated Alger Hiss, apologists for Hiss tried to undermine it by noting that Schmidt couldn't produce the relevant documents. When the Venona files further implicated him, true-believers insisted that the identification of "Ales" as Hiss was speculative. Now that Schmidt's finding has been verified, we await the next salvo from the anti-anti-communists.

ERIC BREINDEL, editorial page editor of the *New York Post*, and HERBERT ROMERSTEIN, former director of the United States Information Agency Office to Counter Soviet Disinformation, are writing a book on the Venona files.

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Nearing the altar on gay marriage.

HAWAIIAN AYE

By Andrew Sullivan

Whatever your view of same-sex marriage, the December 3 lower court ruling in Hawaii was undoubtedly a watershed. It means one remarkable thing: in all likelihood, within a year, some same-sex couples will be legally married in America. The legal precedent is a critical one—and to understand why, it's worth reviewing a little history. Although marriage has essentially been a heterosexual institution, of course, there have been scattered instances in which societies have recognized some forms of same-sex marriage. Same-sex union ceremonies—of contested significance—date from the first millennium in some parts of Christian Europe; formal same-sex marriages were instituted in places as diverse as nineteenth-century Africa (between women) and seventeenth-century China (between men). They were known among Native Americans, as historians and anthropologists have long documented. But in broader, Western culture, although they have existed underground for centuries, they have a relatively recent history as a political issue. Early gay rights campaigners raised the issue in the 1950s, and legal suits in pursuit of equal marriage rights for homosexuals date from the 1970s. But it was not until 1993 that an American court agreed that the denial of a marriage license to a lesbian or gay couple constituted discrimination.

That was the case behind our current drama. The Hawaii Supreme Court ruled in *Baehr* v. *Lewin* (now renamed *Baehr* v. *Miike*) that a lesbian woman, Nina Baehr, had been denied the right to marry her female partner because she was a woman and not a man. Under Hawaii's Constitution, the court held, that was sex discrimination. The court sent the case back to a lower court to see if the state government of Hawaii could prove it had a "compelling interest" to sustain such discrimination. It couldn't. Its attempt to do so was refuted point by point by the lower court's Judge Kevin Chang in last week's ruling. The case is now referred back to the state Supreme Court for a final ruling. But, since that court found in Baehr's favor the first time and since in the intervening years its composition has, if anything, become more favorable to Baehr's position, the die seems essentially cast.

But didn't the Defense of Marriage Act pre-empt the entire issue? As it turns out, no. For all of last summer's hullabaloo, the act cannot affect what happens in Hawaii. The act essentially said two things: the federal government defines marriage as between a man and a woman, and no state is obliged by the U.S. Constitution to recognize Hawaii's same-sex marriages. The first part is an explicit statement of what was already implicit in federal regulations (it could, however, have the bizarre side-effect of ensuring that a married couple in Hawaii are married according to state law, but unmarried according to federal law). The second part was premised on the notion that the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the U.S. Constitution would mandate same-sex marriage across the nation as soon as it became legal in Hawaii. But that scenario was always extremely unlikely. The Full Faith and Credit Clause has almost invariably taken a backseat to states' rights in the area of marriage. In almost all legal precedents, states have successfully invoked what's called the "public policy exception" to Full Faith and Credit. This means a state can refuse to recognize an out-of-state marriage if such a marriage offends the public policy of its own jurisdiction. The historical precedents here mainly involve miscegenation, where states with bans on interracial marriage regularly refused to recognize such marriages entered into legally in other states.

So where does that leave us now? The most likely turn of events is that in the next few months more and more states will deal with the issue of recognizing—or not recognizing—Hawaii's imminent same-sex marriages. So far, thirty-seven states have considered such legislation, and sixteen have passed bills that would deny recognition to any out-of-state same-sex marriages. In twenty states, however, such bills failed to make it into law. (In one state, New Jersey, the issue is pending.) In the wake of the recent ruling, the fundamentalist right is likely to make an extraordinary push to pass more of these laws, leading to dramatic and divisive battles in many states. The critical one to watch is California. Historically, California has had an extremely liberal record of recognizing out-of-state marriages. As the state closest to Hawaii, and with a large gay and lesbian population, it's likely also to see the largest number of married couples suing for recognition. Last year, a bill designed to ban recognition failed to make it into law. Fundamentalist groups are organizing to push it again. If they succeed, it will be much harder for Hawaiian marriages to find broad national recognition. If they fail, California could prove pivotal to equal marriage rights across the country.

Another possibility is that a couple of states may proactively decide to recognize such marriages, de facto nationalizing equal marriage rights; or, alternatively, that another state court, interpreting equal gender rights protections in its own state constitution, will reach the same conclusion as Judge Chang. Fourteen other states have explicit E.R.A.-style protections similar to Hawaii's. Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld has already said he is in favor of Massachusetts honoring Hawaii's marriages. What are the odds that, in ten years' time, Hawaii will be the sole state with equal marriage rights? Close to zero.

Still, assume every other state bans same-sex marriage and refuses to recognize Hawaii's. Even under

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those conditions, as law professors Andrew Koppelman, Seth Kreimer and Larry Kramer (no, not *that* Larry Kramer) have pointed out, such marriages may still find niches in the rest of the country. When the couples travel, for example, they are likely to be accorded some constitutional recognition in transit. The right to travel is deeply embedded in the Constitution. Consider a Hawaiian couple traveling in Utah on vacation (ignore, for a moment, the unlikelihood of that occurring). Say they're involved in a car accident with a Utahan drunk driver and one spouse is killed. Imagine, further, that the other spouse files a wrongful death suit against the drunk driver. It is highly likely, according to experts in this area of law, that Utah would be obliged to recognize the Hawaiian marriage for the purposes of that suit. The same goes for the right of the offspring of Hawaiian same-sex marriages to some secure claim to legitimacy across the country. How fair is it to children, after all, to have them declared illegitimate when their parents move across the country for a new job or a new start? In fact, this is one area of the law that looks set for rapid expansion: same-sex marriage and child custody.

Of course, some wild cards remain. One is that fundamentalists could amend the Hawaii state Constitution to bar same-sex marriages, and so trump the state Supreme Court. The timetable for such an effort, however, is unlikely to beat the timetable for legal same-sex marriage in Hawaii, which could be instituted as early as the beginning of 1998. Such marriages, in other words, could be constitutionally mandated and then constitutionally outlawed, creating an extremely messy legal tangle. It's also possible that were such an amendment to pass it would be vulnerable under the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling against the Colorado amendment, *Romer* v. *Evans*. For such an amendment would also be designating a group of citizens for discrimination by the state in perpetuity, rendering homosexuals "a stranger to the laws" of Hawaii. Just as possible is that such an amendment could fail to pass; Hawaii is a remarkably tolerant, predominantly Democratic state. If national right-wing groups invade the island to amend its Constitution, there could well be a backlash.

Another wild card—with the opposite effect—is that the U.S. Supreme Court could rule that a bar on same-sex marriage is as unconstitutional as bars on interracial marriage once were, under the Fourteenth Amendment, and so mandate same-sex marriage rights across the country. Although this now looks highly unlikely, it's not inconceivable. The difference between *Bowers* v. *Hardwick* (the 1986 Supreme Court ruling that enforced Georgia's discriminatory sodomy law) and *Romer* v. *Evans* last year is great enough that a gay version of *Loving* v. *Virginia* (the interracial marriage case) is not unthinkable early in the new millennium. Such a ruling would, of course, end all the uncertainty, just as *Loving* superseded the morass of state miscegenation laws thirty years ago.

We are, in other words, at the beginning of a protracted and elaborate struggle. Good. This is surely how the system is supposed to work. A civil rights movement moves in fits and starts—in cases, legislation, speeches, debates and votes. We have in Hawaii a perfect example of federalism: in one state we can see what will happen if same-sex marriage is legalized. It should be allowed to go ahead and for the ramifications to sink in. We will then have a chance to debate the issue in every state of the country, for years and maybe decades to come. A deep breath is in order. This week may have been a watershed, but it is the beginning—and not the end—of the attempt to bring homosexuals into the center of American life. •

The fat police go wacky.

HAZARDOUS TO YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

By Stephen Glass

Every once in a while, Michael Jacobson eats Chinese food at a restaurant near his Washington office. He is, to put it mildly, a careful diner. According to those who've been there, merely ordering takes close to fifteen minutes. Jacobson, a slim, intense man, quizzes the waitress on every detail: What is the shrimp stir-fried in? And the ingredients for the sweet-and-sour chicken's breading? And precisely how many pinches of salt are added to the lo mein? The waitress, who barely speaks English, seems confused. Just before she walks hurriedly away, Jacobson blurts out a last request: Could she bring lots of extra plates? When the food comes, Jacobson examines his broccoli in brown sauce carefully. Then, picking up the platter, he maneuvers it above the first empty plate—slowly, gravely, in manner not unlike a surgeon at a particularly tricky

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juncture with the knife, or a priest at the moment of transubstantiation. He tips the platter just a bit, so the broccoli stays put but the sauce pours off, forming a large, brown puddle on the plate. Jacobson turns his attention to a second empty plate. Onto this, he spoons serving upon serving of white rice, and then, again with that surgico-priestly air, he slowly mixes in the denuded broccoli. The final gastronomic result is one large serving composed of about seven parts white rice to one part broccoli, all of it as thoroughly integrated as a model magnet school. "His mush makes you quite suddenly lose your appetite," one of Jacobson's veteran dining companions says. "I warn you: don't order an egg roll. He'll tell you to blot off the globs of fat with your napkin."

Michael Jacobson is the closest thing we have to a national nag. The group he heads, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), is our universal mom, scolding us to stay away from Frosted Flakes and shaming us into eating our vegetables. For twenty-five years, CSPI, which was founded in 1971 by three Ralph Naderites, has successfully lobbied Congress to require nutritional and ingredient labels on nearly everything. Much of the group's basic information—like the cardboard food pyramids it sells—is nutritionally solid. In the past few years, though, the center has sharply escalated its tone of alarm—mom has gone hysteric—and it appears to have done this for a simple, calculated reason: hysteria sells. In a drive to boost the newsletter subscriptions that are its primary source of revenue, the center has increasingly tended to abandon the scientific method in favor of media hype. Its almost monthly nutrition and poison scares draw enormous press attention, which subsequently generates subscribers. Less respect for good science also allows CSPI to push more easily a puritanical agenda against alcohol, meat, desserts, caffeine, microwave ovens and even flatulence.

The center's changed priorities are reflected in the makeup of its board. What was chartered as an "advocacy organization run by scientists" now only has two scientists, including Jacobson, an MIT-trained microbiologist, on its board of directors. The remainder of the seats are filled by an actress, two lawyers, an accountant, a statistician and an advocate for the poor.

As the center's fame has grown among the credulous media, its reputation has suffered among public health professionals. "They're really a misnomer," says Bernadine Healy, a former director of the National Institutes of Health, about CSPI. "It's not always science, and these mini-scares are not in the public interest." A scientist with the Food and Drug Administration says of the group, "They used to help us, now they're getting out of hand ... the media makes us look at every little thing they do no matter what. If they said dog crap smelled, we'd be on it."

The credit, or blame, for the transformation of the Center for Science in the Public Interest goes to Jacobson. When CSPI started, its handful of employees worked on a shoestring budget out of borrowed office space. Funding was roughly split between subscriptions to their newsletter, foundation grants and donations. In the 1970s and early '80s CSPI grew modestly. Its newsletter often looked like a monograph. Its voice was reasonable and technical, if at times boring. CSPI's budget hovered around $1 million. But by the early 1990s readers began noticing a shift. The stories got splashier and sometimes downright peculiar. March 1991's cover story, "Out of Gas?: Emission Controls," is a case in point. It analyzed ways to curtail flatulence (helpfully suggesting "... there's always the last-gasp approach: hang around with people who eat the same foods as you do").

The newsletter developed a talent for conveying its message in the gimmicky, attention-getting way the press likes and the public notices. Instead of measuring fat content of food items in grams, it began using the Big Mac or the Quarter Pounder as a yardstick. Readers loved the new look. Since 1991, the newsletter's circulation has tripled. At $24 per year, it has boosted CSPI's budget to $13 million and enlarged the staff to fifty people. Now, about three-quarters of CSPI's funding comes from the publication.

All of this was Jacobson's design. According to a report in *The Los Angeles Times*, Jacobson instructed CSPI's nutrition director "to be more direct by removing 'weasel words'—qualifiers such as 'suggests' and 'maybe' " from the newsletter. And Jacobson concocted the sort of stunts the media cannot resist—junk food for the cameras. He dressed up as Tony the Tiger during his campaign against sweetened cereals. More recently, he attached 170 rotted teeth to a petition he sent the Federal Trade Commission. He even knew the press well enough to anticipate its cheap shots. Under Jacobson, the CSPI adopted a strict rule banning its employees from eating junk food in the office, so nosy reporters can't write "gotcha" stories.

The center's breakthrough came in 1993, when the newsletter published its "A Wok on the Wild Side" feature bemoaning the fat in Chinese food. Hundreds of newspapers and television stations delivered CSPI's bad news about General Tso's chicken and other take-out favorites, and business at Chinese restaurants declined by 25 percent. A few months later, CSPI warned readers to "see if their cardiologist is on call" before ordering fettuccine alfredo. The new approach was so successful at generating attention and new subscribers that it became a staple of the center's work, and of press coverage. Next came attacks on movie-theater popcorn (a single bucket of unbuttered popcorn popped in coconut oil was the equivalent of six Big Macs, moviegoers were warned) and Mexican food ("OILÉ!" the headline read).

In a small way, the center's campaign against junk food was in the public interest. It was helpful for people to learn that some Chinese dishes were a great deal more fatty than others, and the popcorn report scared movie theaters away from high-fat coconut oil, a minor triumph.

But CSPI's studies won little respect among scientists. Nutritionists discounted the center's research as funda-

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mentally flawed because the center exaggerated the threat that particular dishes posed by not looking at their place in Americans' overall diet. Consider, for sample, the report on Chinese restaurants. Sure, Kung Pao chicken (or "Kung Pow!" as the center calls it) has the same amount of fat as four Quarter Pounders. But when it's consumed, as it commonly is, family style, with other dishes and with plenty of rice, the fat-load drops considerably. Likewise, while movie-theater popcorn may be high in fat, not many people eat it as a staple meal, and what they regularly eat—rather than their occasional splurge—is far more important.

"The newsletter is a good read, but it's like a religion," the FDA scientist says. "They're a group of goody-two shoes too old for the playground. Just look at what they say about drinking." Like fat, alcohol is a CSPI taboo. The organization lobbies tirelessly for higher alcohol taxes and sales restrictions. When *The Journal of the American Medical Association* claimed people who drink a daily glass of wine have a lower chance of heart attacks, CSPI went ballistic. "[T]he last thing the world needs is more drinkers, even moderate ones," the newsletter preached, blaming them for unspecified "carnage."

And it is not just in its restaurant reports that the center uses science in a misleading and sloppy fashion. After an uncontrolled study showed some would-be mothers who drank more than a cup of coffee's worth of caffeine had not gotten pregnant after three months of trying, the CSPI newsletter ran a headline questioning if caffeine was the "new oral contraceptive"—this despite the fact that it takes, on average, six months to a year to conceive. According to the American Society of Reproductive Medicine, the average woman has only a 20 percent chance of getting pregnant each cycle. That means only three in five perfectly healthy women will conceive after three months of trying. It's common for physicians and insurance companies to wait a year or more before declaring someone infertile.

On the subject of food sensitivities, CSPI has been downright absurd. Its May 1994 newsletter warned under the headline "SIMPLY SHOCKING": "Several years ago, a man who was allergic to peanuts was assured by a waiter in a Vietnamese restaurant that the dish he ordered was peanut-free. A few minutes after serving the food, the waiter told the man that it did, in fact, contain slivered peanuts. The man pushed the dinner aside. Despite having taken only one bite and having gone to the restroom to administer himself emergency adrenaline as a precaution, he was dead within two hours." What's more shocking, that's not at all what happened, according to *The Journal of the American Medical Association.* The 43-year-old man had known for years that he had a "severe" allergy to peanuts. After finding out the dish contained slivered nuts, he "inappropriately" tried to treat himself with the wrong pill. Then, bizarrely, he returned to the table and ate every bite of the poisonous meal. He died about ninety minutes later. The *JAMA* article strikes a cautionary note in its first sentence, which says that these fatal food allergies occur "rarely." In sixteen months, the journal's researchers could only find seven cases nationwide.

Knowing how much CSPI hates fat, Proctor & Gamble might have expected the group to embrace olestra, their new fake fat, which has no calories or cholesterol and can be fried to make snacks like potato chips. Instead, olestra is a case study in how CSPI advances its puritanical agenda by using shoddy data to inflate claims about a product's dangers.

The latest, and in many ways greatest, of the center's dubious crusades for science in the media's interest owes its beginnings to happenstance in the laboratory in 1968. Studying the problems that premature babies have absorbing fat, two Proctor & Gamble scientists accidentally altered a table sugar molecule, creating what came to be called olestra. In 1987, after nineteen years of work, P&G asked the FDA to approve it as a fat substitute for snacks. Olestra worked because, essentially, it was indigestible. Real fat, as every dieter knows, stays with you; olestra passes through. This quality, though, gave the substance its one enduring complication: some people who eat large quantities of olestra get diarrhea.

CSPI lept into the anti-olestra campaign with great hoopla. It invoked battle songs (sung to the tune of "Maria" from *West Side Story*: "... Say it loud when there's painful bloating. Say it soft when your sphincter's floating...") and promised to defeat what one CSPI staffer called, memorably, "a great propagator of catastrophic anal leakage." Memorably, but inaccurately. Temporary diarrhea, generally no greater than that induced by prunes, can be catastrophically embarrassing, but it's not a hazardous medical condition.

Essentially, CSPI claimed P&G studies were invalid since they pooled heterogeneous smaller studies. Many reporters and some FDA evaluators might have accepted CSPI's claims until David Allison, a Columbia University scientist who studies obesity and sat on the FDA's food advisory panel, asked for the group's formal statistical analysis. Scientists like Allison run statistical tests to determine whether data from different studies can be pooled. "I ran a quick and dirty calculation and found [CSPI's claim] wasn't the case," Allison says. "When I questioned them, they said they didn't do a formal statistical analysis, they just eyeballed the data. In my opinion, that's behaving inappropriately ... their statements implied and were intended to imply they had conducted analysis which they hadn't."

CSPI has since tried to discredit pro-olestra scientists by claiming they were connected to industry. Research by any scientist who had ever received a grant from P&G, or a related industry, should be ignored, CSPI argued. To CSPI, the quality of the data was irrelevant. "That's not the way science works," says Allison, who has never received a grant from P&G. "We examine evidence." Furthermore, by this standard, CSPI might have to disqualify itself from commenting on smoking. IRS records from 1982 indicate the group received a

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$38,000 grant from the North Carolina-based Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, a charitable organization founded with tobacco money.

Last spring, several months after the FDA approved olestra with a warning label, P&G began test-marketing its olestra product Frito-Lay Max Chips in three cities in Colorado, Iowa and Wisconsin. In June, Michael Jacobson called a press conference. He said CSPI had talked to dozens of dissatisfied Max chip eaters. One even claimed to be "chained to the toilet" after eating chips made with olestra. He then unveiled an advertising campaign for the three "diarrhea capitals." In CSPI's television ads, the olestra warning label dissolved off of a dog food can and onto a bag of chips. The voice-over said: "Would you give it to your dog? ... Are you going to give them to your kids?" The ad also announced a toll-free CSPI number that Max eaters could call with complaints. When asked after the press conference if CSPI had new statistical evidence that refuted P&G's safety claims, Jacobson said no.

In July, Jacobson held another press conference to announce the results of a survey CSPI had commissioned. A shocking 20 percent of respondents said the chips had caused them gastrointestinal problems. The media dutifully reported the study—without talking to gastroenterologists, who dispute these types of reports. Physicians say it is clinically difficult, if not impossible, for people to link diarrhea with any specific food, especially after eating it only once. Plus, the survey was far from a model poll. CSPI's earlier advertisements may have already conditioned the respondents negatively toward the chips.

Weeks after that press conference, Jacobson released the most baffling results: 153 people had registered complaints with CSPI's toll-free number. His weighty analysis of the calls once again impressed the media. But it was scientifically irrelevant. Since only people who got sick called CSPI, not only was the population skewed, but there was absolutely no way to statistically control for truthful answers.

Jacobson says he thinks these call-in data show the FDA needs a stronger warning label. The current label says olestra may cause cramping and loose stool. Jacobson's suggestion: "Olestra may cause diarrhea, loose stools, increased bowel movements, fecal urgency, gas and cramps. Symptoms may be severe and persistent. Olestra can cause yellow-orange underwear staining, greasy bowel movements, and yellow-orange discoloration of your stool...." And that's his mild suggestion. He prefers one that says the product could be fatal. I asked Jacobson if there was any condition under which it would be okay for P&G to sell the chips to adults.

What if we had his ideal label on the package—one that says these chips could kill you—would that be okay?

"No. It might be hard to see on the back of the bag," he said.

Okay. So what if we put it on the front of the bag?

"People still might not see it. It could get scrunched down."

Let's say we put it in a cardboard box that can't fold up.

"They still might not read it before they ate the chips."

What if we put blinking lights around it?

"No. Let's say you're at a party and they're mixed in a bowl with regular chips, how will you know?"

What if we required them to dye the chips blue?

"I don't think so," he insisted. "I mean, I don't know, say the consumer was blind...." •

The new fault line on the right.

NEOCON V. THEOCON

By Jacob Heilbrunn

On September 26, after the Senate failed to overturn President Clinton's veto of a ban on partial-birth abortions, Paul Weyrich, Gary Bauer and other leaders of the religious right assembled in the antechamber of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's office. The rhetoric could not have been more fiery. As Lott looked on approvingly, Watergate felon and evangelist Charles Colson declared, "a nation which sanctions infanticide is no better than China, no better than Nazi Germany." Richard John Neuhaus, a Catholic priest, went even further. "It is not hyperbole to say that we are at a point at which millions of conscientious American citizens are reflecting upon whether this is a legitimate regime," Neuhaus said. "That is the solemn moment we have reached."

Despite the apocalyptic tone of what was, after all, an open meeting convened by the most powerful Republi-

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can in Congress, the gathering in Lott's chambers attracted little notice. But this meeting was not an isolated or aberrant event. It was a harbinger of a political development that has now reached fruition: a full-fledged war between two leading groups of conservative intellectuals over the basic question of what constitutes a moral conservatism and a moral society.

This war is deeply personal. On one side are the mostly Jewish neoconservatives, a fairly small group of ex-New York leftists who have wielded influence greatly beyond their numbers through sheer intellectual energy. Since the conservative renascence began in the late 1970s, the neocons have given it much of its form and heft; building on the earlier work of William F. Buckley Jr., they provided most of the ideas and arguments that allowed conservatism to compete with (and in many areas triumph over) liberalism. As conservatism benefited from the neocons, so did the neocons benefit from conservatism. They made conservatism intellectually respectable, and conservatism made them intellectually important. Now challenging the neocons is an equally small (and equally ambitious, and equally disputatious) group of what might be called theocons—mostly Catholic intellectuals who are attempting to construct a Christian theory of politics that directly threatens the entire neoconservative philosophy. This attempt, in the eyes of at least some of the neocons, also directly threatens Jews. What makes the matter all the more painful for both sides is that, until recently, the neocons and the theocons were, for the best of political reasons, the best of friends.

And this war is fundamental. It is rooted in a battle over the identity of the American nation. The neoconservatives believe that America is special because it was founded on an idea—a commitment to the rights of man embodied in the Declaration of Independence—not in ethnic or religious affiliations. The theocons, too, argue that America is rooted in an idea, but they believe that idea is Christianity. In their view, the United States is first and foremost a Christian nation, governed ultimately by natural law. When moral law—moral law as defined by Thomas Aquinas and enunciated by John Paul II—conflicts with the laws of man, they say, the choice is clear: God's law transcends the arbitrary and tyrannical decrees of what the theocons increasingly refer to as an American judicial "regime."

The war between the neocons and the theocons first broke into the open in November, when Neuhaus published a symposium in his magazine, *First Things*, titled "THE END OF DEMOCRACY?" The symposium made explicit for the first time the central point of the Catholic intellectuals' thesis: that the government of the United States (in particular the judiciary) had become so debased—so, essentially, un-Christian and therefore so illegitimate—as to threaten the existence of America as a nation under God, and that this crisis might require a revolutionary response. The ultimate paradox: a conservative revolution.

In the introduction to the symposium, the editors likened the United States to Nazi Germany and cited an encyclical from Pope John Paul II to justify entertaining the possibility of revolution against a judicial tyranny: "Law, as it is presently made by the judiciary, has declared its independence from morality." The editors asked point-blank whether "we have reached or are reaching the point where conscientious citizens can no longer give moral assent to the existing regime." They went on to observe that "America is not and, please God, will never become Nazi Germany, but it is only blind hubris that denies it can happen here and, in peculiarly American ways, may be happening here." The same issue contained quotations from the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer on resisting the Nazi regime.

In individual essays, Robert Bork, Robert P. George, Russell Hittinger, Hadley Arkes and Charles Colson discussed the three court cases that form the foundation for the theocons' assertion that the judiciary has usurped power and assaulted the values of its host society: the 1992 Supreme Court decision in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, when the Court refused to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*; the 1996 Supreme Court decision *Romer* v. *Evans*, when the Court declared that Coloradans voting against gay-rights statutes were driven by animus; and the 1996 Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision upholding euthanasia, a decision written by the liberal judge Stephen Reinhardt, which the Supreme Court seems likely to overturn.

Bork cited approvingly the suggestion of his staunchly Catholic wife that the high court's rulings were essentially illegal: "My wife said the Justices were behaving like a 'band of outlaws.' ... An outlaw is a person who coerces others without warrant in law. That is precisely what a majority on the present Supreme Court does." Bork called for stripping the Court of the power of judicial review or subjecting its decisions to a vote in the Senate and House of Representatives. (In his new best-selling book, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, Bork sees the root of the evil in the Declaration of Independence.) Russell Hittinger, a professor at the University of Tulsa who has published a book on natural law theory, maintained that "civil disobedience" may be necessary as a weapon against "despotic rule" of the courts. Robert P. George, in an essay called "The Tyrant State," advised readers that the "doctrine of the necessary conformity of civil law to moral truth long predates the rise of modern democracy. It ... was given careful, systematic exposition by Thomas Aquinas. It has been a central feature of the tradition of papal social teaching."

These ideas are not entirely new. In one way or another, the right has been inveighing against the judiciary since the Warren Court and against the immorality of the government since *Roe* v. *Wade*. And in recent years these arguments have gained political strength, as the Christian Coalition became a power, as Patrick Buchanan rose to national political prominence, and as the idea of the government as an illegitimate occupying power gained greater currency among a wider population increasingly

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alienated from Washington. But what *was* new about the *First Things* symposium was the attempt to fashion a cogent, serious and popular intellectual framework for these ideas—to render respectable ideas that intellectuals had come to regard as the province of the radical right and the booboisie. Pat Buchanan and Bob Dornan and Phyllis Schlafly had never threatened the neoconservatives because they didn't compete on the same plane. This, though, was an attempt to do just that.

The neocon response was as impassioned as it was swift. Neoconservative heavies such as Gertrude Himmelfarb, Walter Berns and Peter Berger immediately resigned from the editorial boards of *First Things*. Norman Podhoretz, the chief popularizer of neoconservatism, entered the lists to denounce Neuhaus for the "aid and comfort you for all practical purposes offer the bomb throwers among us." Podhoretz declared, "I did not become a conservative in order to be a radical, let alone to support the preaching of revolution against this country." The furor caused by the November symposium begat a second symposium in *First Things*, this one to be published in the upcoming January issue. This time, the thoroughly alarmed neoconservatives went ballistic, employing the language of the old right against the old left and the new right against the new left, invoking the ghosts of anti-Americanism and radicalism and "subversive" activity. And Gertrude Himmelfarb warned that Catholics threatened to undermine the very thing they claimed to want, the ordering of American society according to Judeo-Christian ethics. The theocons' radical rhetoric, she wrote, "discredits, or at the very least makes suspect, any attempt by conservatives to introduce moral and religious considerations into the 'public square'—as if morality and religion necessarily lead to such apocalyptic conclusions. It can only confirm many Americans in their suspicion that cultural conservatism is outside the 'mainstream' of American politics, that it is 'extremist,' even subversive." William J. Bennett, who is both a Catholic moralist and a sort of neoconservative, weighed in with a rejection of the Catholics' core notion: "We are still America, not 'Amerika.' "

The battle that was joined in November and continued in the January issue of *First Things* has spread to other publications of the right. David Brooks, writing in the neoconservative *Weekly Standard*, warned of "the right's anti-American temptation," a play on the title of Bork's book *The Tempting of America. The Wall Street Journal* and *National Review* have weighed in on the controversy. In late November, a group of conservatives from both sides, Neuhaus, William Kristol and Buckley, met in an attempt to reach a truce. They got nowhere.

To understand why the dispute is likely to resist further efforts at peacemaking, it helps to consider briefly the core beliefs of both neoconservatism and American Catholic conservatism on the nature of America. The neoconservative understanding of the United States is strongly influenced by the works of the political theorist Leo Strauss. Strauss began his greatest book, *Natural Right and History*, by citing the Declaration of Independence as embodying man's natural rights. He argued that contempt for natural rights and the Declaration had led to the spread of relativism and nihilism in the West, but his solution was not religion. The values of religion, Strauss believed, should inform a properly constructed society, but the state must not explicitly endorse any religious code. The formula is reminiscent of Gibbon's famous observation that "the various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people, as equally true; by the philosopher, as equally false; and by the magistrate, as equally useful." Strauss believed that America was founded on the idea of the natural rights of man, but his vision of those natural rights was not that of the Thomists. Strauss maintained that Aquinas's conception of natural law could not be reconciled with Aristotle's vision of natural rights, and that it was the Athenian vision of democracy that must prevail in an America comprised of diverse peoples: "the divine law is not the natural law, let alone natural right," wrote Strauss.

The theocrats will have none of this. They are Thomists, would-be prophets of a new Age of Aquinas; their properly constructed America would, like the America of the Straussians, be based on an idea. But for the neocons that idea is the natural law of Thomas Aquinas. Like the Straussians, they decry relativism and cultural decadence, but their solution is to embrace explicitly the notion of a Christian nation: a nation that accepts the idea of a transcendent divine law that carries universal obligations even for nonbelievers.

The founding father of the new Thomist movement is the theologian Germain Grisez, a Christian ethics professor at Mount St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Grisez, who helped persuade Pope John Paul II to force the Catholic University of America to expel Charles Curran in 1986, is the author, among other works, of the standard two-volume guide to Catholicism *The Way of the Lord Jesus: Living a Christian Life*. In it, Grisez develops a comprehensive natural law theory in opposition to modernity. In his preface, he observes that culture now influences Christianity rather than Christianity influencing culture. Most notably, Grisez points out that obligations to a higher law as defined by the Catholic Church can supersede laws of the government; "sometimes, too, a government which on the whole is just has laws which unjustly permit the violation of a certain group's fundamental human rights, for example, laws permitting abortion. Now, in general, if citizens observe one person killing another, they may use the minimum force necessary to defend the victim's life, and in such a case, laws against trespassing, the destruction of property, and so forth should not keep anyone from doing what is required." Among Grisez's followers are Princeton professor Robert P. George, who serves on the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, and John Finnis of Oxford University Law. Finnis,

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one of the most prominent opponents of homosexuality, draws on natural law to argue that society must publicly discourage "waverers" from joining the ranks of homosexuals and that homosexuality "disposes the participants to engage in an abdication of responsibility for the future of mankind."

The most comprehensive explication of natural law theory, however, comes in two volumes published by Oxford's Clarendon Press and edited by Robert P. George. In *The Autonomy of Law*, for example, Finnis argues that though "human law is artefact and artifice ... both its positing and the recognition of its positivity ... cannot be understood without reference to the moral principles that ground and confirm its authority...." George declares that law is a "cultural object that is created for a moral purpose." He concludes by quoting Bork on the need for judges not to presume that they can dictate natural law.

For many years, as conservatism gained strength in America, the natural gulf between the neocons' Straussian view and the theocons' Thomism was ignored for a number of reasons. One was that modern American conservatism was greatly defined by William F. Buckley, and Buckley, though a devout Catholic, initially took a phlegmatic view of doctrinal disputes. In the 1960s, as the conservative Catholic movement split over the issue of pragmatic political decisions versus doctrinal considerations in the matter of such issues as abortion and homosexuality, Buckley chose pragmatism. In 1966, he outraged many Catholics when he stated that non-Catholics were not bound by Church teachings: "Surely the principal meaning of the ... pronouncements of Vatican II is that other men must be left free to practice the dictates of their own conscience." Buckley's brother-in-law, L. Brent Bozell, broke with *National Review* to co-found with Frederick Wilhelmsen a Spanish Carlist movement called "Sons of Thunder" and a magazine called *Triumph*. "The Catholic Church in America," he declared, "must forthrightly acknowledge that a state of war exists between herself and the American political order." In what Patrick Allitt in *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics* terms "the first antiabortion drama of a type made familiar two decades later by Operation Rescue," Bozell and his followers, dressed in red berets and carrying papal flags, stormed a George Washington University clinic that was supposedly conducting abortions, and were arrested.

But by and large, Catholic conservatives, like conservatives in general, chose Buckley's way, not Bozell's. Then came 1973 and the Supreme Court decision of *Roe* v. *Wade*, a radicalizing event for many Catholics. Since then, the United States has seen a more or less continuous debate over the old and new moral order of things, and this debate has further radicalized many Christians. It has also further eroded the dominance of Buckleyite pragmatism.

Another reason for the rise of Thomism is that the old cultural divide between Catholics and Protestants has been shrinking for years. As this has occurred, the moralist Catholics and evangelical Protestants have discovered more and more that they share a natural affinity of ideas, and they have been moving steadily closer together. The first great step took place almost two decades ago, when religious right leaders such as Jerry Falwell adopted the right-to-life stance espoused by the Catholic Church. Falwell declared that Protestants had "joined the fight" and lauded Pope John Paul II as the "best hope we Baptists ever had." It was a little-noticed but important moment in political history: northern Catholics and Southern Baptists—two powerful blocs that had traditionally shared an allegiance to the Democratic Party but had also traditionally viewed one another with cultural suspicion—had joined hands in cultural conservatism.

In May, 1994, *First Things* issued a declaration titled "EVANGELICALS & CATHOLICS TOGETHER." The declaration was signed by Neuhaus, Colson, Pat Robertson, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ and Jesse Miranda of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God. It stated that "there has been in recent years a growing convergence and cooperation between Evangelicals and Catholics" and that "we will do all in our power to resist proposals for euthanasia, eugenics, and population control that ... betray the moral truths of our constitutional order."

The alliance has grown ever since, lending strength to both groups. As the neocons provided the intellectual muscle for Reagan conservatism, so now the Catholic Thomists are providing the brainpower for the Christian Coalition. George and Finnis were the star witnesses on behalf of the state of Colorado in the *Romer* v. *Evans* gay rights case. The ballot, which would have permitted local communities to discriminate on the basis of homosexuality, had originally been funded by evangelist James C. Dobson's organization. And Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia invokes Catholic teachings in his public speeches and has written with approbation of a culture war in his court dissents. "The court," he wrote in its review of the *Romer* case, "has mistaken a *Kulturkampf* for a fit of spite."

The final reason for the rise of the theocons is the one perhaps most painful to neocons. It is the work of the neocons themselves. For years, figures such as Gertrude Himmelfarb, Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz have hailed religious populism and denounced liberals for viewing it as a threat. And for years, the neoconservatives have been arguing, in tones frequently of despair and anger, precisely the theme espoused by the Catholic intellectuals they now denounce: that the American cultural elite and the American judiciary constituted an overclass both alien from and largely hostile to the values of the nation as a whole. It was Kristol who concocted the theory of a "new class" of intellectuals hostile to its own country. In recent years, and to this day, the neoconservatives have embraced and defended the Christian right. Writing in *Commentary*, in August 1991, Kristol argued that the danger to the republic was not Christian fundamentalism, but the secular human-

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ism of the new class. "American Jews, alert to Christian anti-Semitism," he wrote, "are in danger of forgetting that it was the pagans—the Babylonians and the Romans—who destroyed the temples and twice imposed exile on the Jewish people." In the October 1996 issue of *Commentary*, Podhoretz compared the "liberal *culturati*" to the "Stalinists of the '30s," and bemoaned the "bigotry with which the Christian Coalition itself is routinely discussed in liberal circles." And it was the neoconservatives, in their arguments, who laid the groundwork for the Thomists' portrayal of the United States as a captive nation under an illegitimate judicial "regime." The idea of the Supreme Court as the aggressor in the culture wars, while conservatives are simply the beleaguered minority, belongs to the neocons at least as much as it does to the theocons. As Cornell professor Jeremy Rabkin recently wrote of the Supreme Court justices in Kristol's *Public Interest*: "In an age of confusing transitions, the justices are the last dogmatists. It requires such dogmatists to sustain a culture war."

In the second of the *First Things* symposia, Midge Decter wrote a poignant plea to the theocons to stop pushing their doctrine. "I could hardly believe my eyes," she wrote of her readings in the first symposium. "I presume in the name of friendship, then, to accuse you of growing impatient with your labors, and in your impatience, reckless. And I beg you: do not be impatient, and for heaven's sake do not be reckless about the legitimacy of this country.... You will only end by strengthening the devil's hand." Her essay was followed immediately by what amounted to a response and flat rejection from Dobson. Dobson declared that he stood in a long tradition of Christians who believed that rulers may "forfeit their divine mandate" when they contravene "divine moral law," and he concluded by asking whether "clergy and laity alike [will] be willing to face cultural ostracism, imprisonment, or worse."

When Neuhaus and Dobson and Grisez hear Podhoretz and Kristol and Decter accuse them of not acting like true conservatives—of being radical and subversive—they must be at least a little tempted to laugh. Well, yes. Of course they are radicals and subversives. That is what they intended to be all along; that is what they have always been. They see America in 1990 as the abolitionists saw it in 1860—as a state that is violating God's law and must be resisted, by any means necessary. They suspect the neocons of mouthing the rhetoric but not having the stomach for the consequences of their own talk, and they regard them with attitudes ranging from exasperation to contempt. Hadley Arkes, a professor of political theory at Amherst, speaking of neoconservatives and abortion, laments that in "their heart of hearts," the neoconservatives "don't think people are being killed in these surgeries. They think we're going to the edge of fanaticism." Paul Weyrich, who heads the Free Congress Foundation, is openly dismissive. "I resent the political correctness of some of the neocons who suggest that you can't discuss something." He asks: "If a government is illegitimate, do you stop paying taxes, do you stop serving in its armed forces? These are all questions which need to be thoroughly thought through."

If the Thomists have a public face that is at all nationally known, it is that of Alan Keyes, who this year made his second quixotic run for the presidency. Last summer, in a half-filled hotel ballroom, in the midst of the otherwise content-free Republican National Convention, Keyes gave the inaugural address of a group he calls The Declaration Foundation. The foundation is the Thomists' first attempt to organize politically, and Keyes's speech was the first speech by an articulate conservative to present an intellectually cogent argument on behalf of Thomism.

"I believe that it is absolutely clear, in everything the Founders did, that they intended the Declaration to be a bridge between the Bible and the Constitution, between the basis of our moral faith and the basis of our political life," Keyes said. "The Declaration constitutes a definition of the source and limits of our freedom. The source is God. And the limits are quite clearly defined: we cannot use the freedom in such a way as to claim unto ourselves the authority which is the basis of our freedom."

Keyes knows this is a radical doctrine in the context of the American experience. That's why he likes it. He maintains that he is not preaching revolution, and he seemed surprised by the controversy surrounding the *First Things* symposium. "How can that be anti-American?" he asked last week. It is a question that the neocons must wish they had never helped raise.

Keyes's campaign was a failure. The "Republican moneybags," as he puts it, shut him down. But there does seem to be some grass-roots receptivity to his message, which Keyes booms away at on his daily radio show. The very success of Keyes and his fellow theocons in propagating their doctrine inside the GOP would, however, condemn the party itself to failure. A Catholic tradition that attempts to infuse a religiously neutral Constitution with divine right is a recipe for political disaster. Thomism is an ideology to which only the faithful can subscribe. It is not so much anti-American as un-American.

Until now, the neoconservatives have preferred to tune out the message and embrace the messenger. These intellectual operatives have operated on the comforting assumption that a common interest animates evangelicals, Catholics and neoconservatives. Father Neuhaus has not: in the December issue of *First Things*, he praises the declaration of the Southern Baptist Convention last summer in favor of evangelizing the Jews. "[T]he Baptists," he writes, "were responding to Christian theologians who had singled out Jews as being exempt from the otherwise universal need for the Gospel." That's not the sort of overture you expect from an old friend. It has begun to dawn on the neoconservatives what can happen when, to borrow a phrase from Midge Decter, you strengthen the devil's hand. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

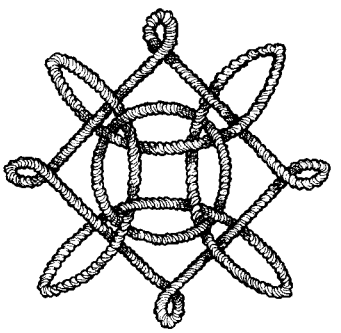
Paradigm regained

Once upon a time during the cold war we had a paradigm. It explained just about everything we wanted to know: why the Russians were so beastly, why we had to fight wars in Asia, why we built thousands of nuclear missiles. Our paradigm was the ideological struggle between freedom and communism. It served us well for decades, even as our energies flagged, until a few years ago when, along with the Soviet Union, it collapsed.

The intervening years have produced several attempts to forge a new paradigm to replace the lost old one. Francis Fukuyama told us the discrediting of communism would lead to the "end of history" since there would no longer be any great conflicting idea to argue about. But history is more than ideas. It's also about, among other things, violent combat, and in this realm it seems to be moving along nicely. George Bush, for a few minutes, promised a "new world order" in which the old Wilsonian principles of democracy, self-determination and capitalism would reign triumphant under the benevolent wing of American power. The Gulf war was to have been the crucible in which this new order was forged. Unfortunately it didn't work out that way, and after America proved unable or unwilling to solve disillusioning outbreaks of disorder in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda, Wilson's dream went back on hold. For the first time in a half century, we were paradigm-less.

Enter Samuel Huntington. In a widely quoted article three years ago in *Foreign Affairs*, the prominent Harvard political scientist argued that the fault lines between civilizations rather than the borders between states represent the battle lines of the future. Instead of ideology or geopolitics, the new paradigm is geoculture. "The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural," he declared. Huntington's edict sent ripples not only through seminar rooms, but through think tanks and government ministries as well. It undercut the happy assumption that now, with the age of ideology behind us, we can all be brothers, bound together in heartfelt allegiance to democracy and capitalism. There are no universal values, Huntington argued, and different corners of the world are not growing more alike, but retreating into cultural cocoons. In this analysis, multiculturalism, the American liberal orthodoxy, is a dangerous delusion. A culture can survive only by remaining true to its core values (and ours are European). The political message is clear: the West must defend itself, at home and abroad. No wonder that in Asia and Africa Huntington's thesis has been dubbed "the West against the rest." Denounced more often than praised, Huntington was nonetheless quoted everywhere. He had not only presented a new paradigm, but touched a raw nerve.

Now he has fleshed out the details in a book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, that is more nuanced but no less provocative. The world's critical divisions, according to Huntington, are between seven or eight civilizations: Western, Orthodox, Confucian, Buddhist, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Latin American, and perhaps sub-Saharan African. The essential point is that these groupings are an individual's deepest source of loyalty and identity. Behind the most intractable quarrels are not ethnic differences, which are often arbitrary and historical rather than racial, but "civilizational" differences—usually based on religion. For Huntington, it is civilization rather than ethnicity or nationality that represents "the broadest level of identification with which [one] intensely identifies."



Thus the Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims, while of the same ethnicity, are products of three different religiously rooted civilizations. This, he maintains, is why Yugoslavia's breakup was so violent—because it provoked a war among Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic civilizations. The Chechen revolt, by the same token, and the deep hatreds it has made manifest, can best be understood as an Islamic jihad against Orthodox domination. This approach, he suggests, may also help us understand why the Arab-Israeli conflict goes on generation after generation. (Huntington, after some initial waffling, has deemed Jews part of the West rather than a separate civilization.)

There is a lot about which one can quarrel with Huntington. Terrible conflicts take place within civilizations, such as the two European wars of this century, or the more recent one between Iran and Iraq, or the genocide by Hutus against Tutsis. The civilization category sometimes seems arbitrary. Is Latin America not part of the West? Is civilizational clash the cause of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, or their pretext? If we can have peaceful multicultural societies, such as our own, why must a multicultural world be conflict-ridden? Indeed, the whole "civilization" thesis sometimes seems motivated by a profound distaste for multiculturalism at home, and can be viewed as an elaborate "decadence of the West" alarm that requires battening down the hatches against cultural assaults from within as well as without. Nonetheless, these caveats, while relevant, do not detract from the imaginative daring of this important book.

The problem, to my mind, is that Huntington has not jettisoned enough in his search for a new paradigm. While he now rejects the so-called "realist" notion that states in an anarchical world are locked into suspicion and thus conflict, he has not liberated himself from the "realist" logic, but merely substituted civilizations for states. In the end, the policy prescription is pretty much the same as it was during the cold war, when the Russians, instead of the Chinese, or the Muslims, or the Hindus, were the "other." For him, it is still the West against the rest.

Instead of probing into the gaps between civilizations and declaring them unbridgeable, Huntington would have done well to apply his formidable analytical skills to the gaps within civilizations. Then he might have found that the most dangerous fault lines are internal rather than external. In a world where the West has penetrated everywhere, and been itself penetrated by other societies or "civilizations," the frontiers of conflict are not between Muslims and Westerners, or Japanese and Hindus, or Latin Americans and Chinese—all ostensibly members of different civilizations. They are between the modernists and the traditionalists: the Saudi engineer and the village mullah, the Shanghai industrialist and the illiterate peasant. They are between the haves and have-nots of the world, between those, in Thomas Friedman's phrase, who live with Macs and Big Macs and those locked behind the walls of tradition. These conflicts are religious in intensity, but they are not about religion. They cut across civilization and make our world a more fragile, less categorically organized place than the one Huntington describes. It is less the West against the rest than the West, and the rest, against itself.

RONALD STEEL

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Troubles

One of the strange bedfellows that politics makes is art. This mating, successful or not, occurs in the film world much more frequently than we tend to be aware of. The success often depends not only on the art but on questions about the politics. Does the film merely repeat and exploit political data, or does it add to our understanding, in fact or in empathy?

The Irish filmmakers Terry George and Jim Sheridan have faced all these questions in **Some Mother's Son** (Castle Rock). The art of this film, without being exceptional, is reticently competent. The political content, which beforehand might suggest that we have already seen the film, becomes more complex and more immediate as the picture proceeds.

In 1981 the IRA activist Bobby Sands was imprisoned in Northern Ireland. Protesting against treatment as a criminal instead of as a prisoner of war, Sands went on a hunger strike. In sixty-six days he was dead. But, in the interim, because of the death of a local MP, Sands had been elected to Parliament. (Parliament soon introduced legislation to prevent IRA prisoners from standing in elections.)

These are facts. George and Sheridan wanted to do more than present facts, powerful though they are; they wanted to bring us empathically closer. So they created a Northern Irish schoolteacher, played by Helen Mirren, whose son is in prison with Sands. Her son, too, goes on a hunger strike. The authors made this teacher a woman who detests violence and thinks it is no way out of her country's troubles.

Further, George and Sheridan created another character, a rough, sturdy farm woman, played by Fionnula Flanagan, who fervently supports the IRA and who has a son in the same prison. So these two women, very different in class and character, are brought together into commonality. The film's focus shifts inexorably from the Sands story, and that of the other prisoners, to the two women, to their different attitudes toward their sons' dedication. The national anguish is thus made personal—without one iota of mawkishness.

The phrase of the title is used by Mirren to persuade her own son that the Protestants he hates are human beings, too. This, as it happens, is almost the only reference to the loyalists in the film. (There is also a loyalist insult splashed on Mirren when she is picketing.) I don't quite see how George and Sheridan could have given the Protestant side equal time, but it's as well for us to remember that *Some Mother's Son* represents only one-third, the Catholic third, of Northern Ireland. Otherwise, it might be possible for us to come away from the film thinking it analogous to one about Norway under the Germans, with a few Norwegians who were sympathetic to the invading force. The sufferings of the IRA prisoners and their families are all too real, but the actions of the army and the police represent the rule of the majority.

The point is worth underscoring just because the film is so effective. George, who co-wrote *In the Name of the Father* with Sheridan, directs—his first such job—and he does it fluently. Too often he has Mirren see someone or something before we do, then cuts to what it is she has seen: it becomes a pat device to stimulate us. Otherwise, his film rings true—helped to truth by his two leading women.

Flanagan is a veteran of theater and film and TV on both sides of the Atlantic. I saw her first in 1974 when she was Molly Bloom in *Ulysses in Nighttown* at the Winter Garden in New York with Zero Mostel as Leopold. In one scene, alone on the big stage in front of a huge audience, Flanagan sat naked on a chamber pot, speaking some of Molly's intimacies. It was one of the most complete triumphs of creative imagination over the familiar that I have ever seen in the theater. From time to time I've glimpsed her in the intervening years, but *Some Mother's Son* gives us a real chance to savor the mature beauty of her face, her combination of peasant strength and Junoesque regality, her power of commitment.

Mirren is no less wondrous just because there's been more chance to see her grow—in itself always something of a miracle in the film world. Mirren's range is extraordinary. Lately she has been the vaguely vicious wife in *The Comfort of Strangers*, a rather studious detective in the TV series "Prime Suspect," and Queen Charlotte in *The Madness of King George*. What she gives us here as this schoolteacher is a woman whose very intelligence and tenderness have in a way insulated her. It's touching, genuine work.

By coincidence a documentary arrives about Northern Ireland in the 1990s.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Crucible. *Arthur Miller's best play, about the Salem witch trials, seems even better now that it's free of modern allusion. Good, and gets better as it goes. (Reviewed 12/16/96)* **The English Patient.** *The screenplay, about several World War II romances, becomes pulpy, but the acting and the cinematography never falter. (12/9/96)* **The Portrait of a Lady.** *Jane Campion directs her own feminist-oriented version of Henry James. If you can accept the approach, she affords some rewards of her own. (12/23/96)* **Shine.** *From Australia, a fictionalized true story about a young pianist pushed into neurosis by a too-sternly loving father—and the after effects. Exceptionally well performed. (11/18/96)*—**SK**

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A Leap of Faith (Parallel Lines), made by two young Irish-American women, Tricia Regan and Jennifer McShane, deals with the founding and the first year of an integrated primary school in Belfast. "Integrated" here is not racially descriptive: it means Protestants and Catholics.

We suspect in advance that the account will be poignant (it is), the children enchanting (they are), and the founder of the school, Helen Farrimond, admirable (most certainly). The film tells us pleasant and unpleasant truths. The interviews with various parents disclose bitter but insistent hope. The narration, done by Liam Neeson, is fascinating. When this school was founded in 1993, there were twenty-four other integrated schools in the six counties, just over 1 percent of the total number. Since then, that percentage has doubled, and this school itself has tripled in size. (One missing fact: the proportions of Catholic and Protestant children in these schools.)

This improvement has not occurred in a new paradise. One of the young mothers says the greatest fear in Northern Ireland isn't of death but of change. During the school's first year there were forty-two killings in the north, and the family of one of the school's children had to leave Belfast because their house was firebombed. And the truce of 1994, which was greeted with "PEACE AT LAST" headlines, has been ruptured.

In this film the most obdurate opposition to school integration—and therefore, by extension, to peace—comes from what we can call the professionals of Protestantism and Catholicism. A Protestant member of Parliament argues that if he had sent his children to an integrated school he would have ill-prepared them for the "real world," as he calls it, because they would then have stepped from harmony into disharmony. A priest who teaches in a Catholic school tells his invisible interviewer that the great enemy is secularism, as represented by "you," the interviewer, the media. Secularism here can't mean anything but the weakening of complete Catholic authority over Catholics.

We owe Regan and McShane our thanks. They went through the usual difficulties to make their modest, moving documentary; they have helped the people they deal with and, in doing so, have helped us. They are not so foolish as to predict that the integration of the schools, slow and contested, will solve all problems, but they realize, and they show us, that the most likely way to resolution in Northern Ireland is through parents' concern for the balanced education of their children. •

The Nobel Lecture.

I Don't Know

By Wisława Szymborska

They say that the first sentence in any speech is always the hardest. Well, that one's behind me. But I have a feeling that the sentences to come—the third, the sixth, the tenth, and so on, up to the final line—will be just as hard, since I'm supposed to talk about poetry. I've said very little on the subject—next to nothing, in fact. And whenever I have said anything, I've always had the sneaking suspicion that I'm not very good at it. This is why my lecture will be rather short. Imperfection is easier to tolerate in small doses.

Contemporary poets are skeptical and suspicious even, or perhaps especially, about themselves. They confess to being poets only reluctantly, as if they were a little ashamed of it. But in our clamorous times it's much easier to acknowledge your faults, at least if they're attractively packaged, than to recognize your merits, since these are hidden deeper and you never quite believe in them yourself. When they fill out questionnaires or chat with strangers—that is, when they can't avoid revealing their profession—poets prefer to use the general term "writer," or to replace "poet" with the name of whatever job they do in addition to writing. Bureaucrats and bus passengers respond with a touch of incredulity and alarm when they discover that they're dealing with a poet. I suppose philosophers meet with a similar reaction. Still, they are in a better position, since as often as not they can embellish their calling with some kind of scholarly title.

WISŁAWA SZYMBORSKA has been awarded the 1996 Nobel Prize for Literature. She is the author of *View With a Grain of Sand: Selected Poems* (Harcourt Brace).

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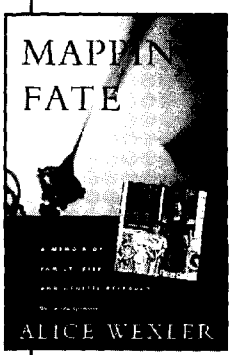

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Professor of philosophy: now that sounds much more respectable.

But there are no professors of poetry. That would mean, after all, that poetry is an occupation requiring specialized study, regular examinations, theoretical articles with bibliographies and footnotes attached and, finally, ceremoniously conferred diplomas. And this would mean, in turn, that it's not enough to cover pages with even the most exquisite poems in order to become a poet. The crucial element is some slip of paper bearing an official stamp. Let us recall that the pride of Russian poetry, the future Nobel Laureate Joseph Brodsky, was once sentenced to internal exile precisely on such grounds. They called him a "parasite," since he lacked official certification granting him the right to be a poet.

Several years ago, I had the honor and the pleasure of meeting Brodsky in person. And I noticed that, of all the poets I've known, he was the only one who enjoyed calling himself a poet. He pronounced the word without inhibitions. Just the opposite: he spoke it with defiant freedom. This must have been, it seems to me, because he recalled the brutal humiliations that he experienced in his youth.

In more fortunate countries, where human dignity isn't assaulted so readily, poets yearn, of course, to be published, read and understood, but they do little, if anything, to set themselves above the common herd and the daily grind. It wasn't so long ago, in this century's first decades, that poets strove to shock us with their extravagant dress and their eccentric behavior. But all this was merely for the sake of public display. The moment always came when poets had to close the doors behind them, strip off their mantles, fripperies and other poetic paraphernalia and confront—silently, patiently awaiting their own selves—the still-white sheet of paper. For finally this is what really counts.

It's not accidental that film biographies of great scientists and artists are produced in droves. The more ambitious directors seek to reproduce convincingly the creative process that led to important scientific discoveries or to the emergence of masterpieces. And one can depict certain kinds of scientific labor with some success. Laboratories, sundry instruments, elaborate machinery brought to life: such scenes may hold an audience's interest for a while. And those moments of uncertainty—will the experiment, conducted for the thousandth time with some tiny modification, finally yield the desired result?—can be quite dramatic. Films about painters can be spectacular, as they go about recreating every stage of a famous painting's evolution, from the first penciled line to the final brush stroke. And music swells in films about composers: the first bars of the melody that rings in the musician's ears finally emerge as a mature work in symphonic form. Of course this is all quite naïve and doesn't explain the strange mental state popularly known as inspiration, but at least there's something to look at and to listen to.

But poets are the worst. Their work is hopelessly unphotogenic. Someone sits at a table or lies on a sofa while staring motionless at a wall or ceiling. Once in a while this person writes down several lines, only to cross out one of them fifteen minutes later, and then another hour passes, during which nothing happens. Who could stand to watch this kind of thing?

I've mentioned inspiration. Contemporary poets answer evasively when asked what it is, and if it actually exists. It's not that they've never known the blessing of this inner impulse. It's just not easy to explain to someone else what you don't understand yourself.

When I'm asked about this on occasion, I hedge, too. But my answer is this: inspiration is not the exclusive privilege of poets or artists. There is, there has been, there will always be, a certain group of people whom inspiration visits. It's made up of all those who've consciously chosen their calling and do their job with love and imagination. It may include doctors, teachers, gardeners—I could list a hundred more professions. Their work becomes one continuous adventure as long as they manage to keep discovering new challenges in it. Difficulties and setbacks never quell their curiosity. A swarm of new questions emerges from every problem that they solve. Whatever inspiration is, it's born from a continuous "I don't know."

There aren't many such people. Most of the earth's inhabitants work to get by. They work because they have to. They didn't pick this or that kind of job out of passion; the circumstances of their lives did the choosing for them. Loveless work, boring work, work valued only because others haven't even got that much—this is one of the harshest human miseries. And there's no sign that the coming centuries will produce any changes for the better as far as this goes.

And so, though I deny poets their monopoly on inspiration, I still place

Some People

Some people flee some other people.
In some country under a sun
and some clouds.

They abandon something like all they've got,
sown fields, some chickens, dogs,
mirrors in which fire now preens.

Their shoulders bear pitchers and bundles.
The emptier they get, the heavier they grow.

What happens quietly: someone's dropping from exhaustion.
What happens loudly: someone's bread is ripped away,
someone tries to shake a limp child back to life.

Always another wrong road ahead of them,
always another wrong bridge
across an oddly reddish river.
Around them, some gunshots, now nearer, now farther away,
above them a plane sort of circles.

Some invisibility would come in handy,
some grayish stoniness,
or, better yet, some nonexistence
for a shorter or a longer while.

Something else will happen, only where and what.
Someone will come at them, only when and who,
in how many shapes, with what intentions.
If he has a choice,
maybe he won't be the enemy
and will let them live some sort of life.

Wisława Szymborska

—translated, from the Polish,
by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh

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them in a select group of Fortune's darlings.

By this point, though, certain doubts may arise in my audience. All sorts of torturers, dictators, fanatics and demagogues struggling for power with a few loudly shouted slogans also enjoy their jobs. They, too, perform their duties with inventive fervor. Well, yes; but they "know," and what they know is enough for them once and for all. They don't want to find out about anything else, since that might diminish the force of their arguments. But knowledge that doesn't lead to new questions quickly dies out. It fails to maintain the temperature required for sustaining life. In the most extreme cases, well known from ancient and modern history, it even poses a lethal threat to society.

This is why I value that little phrase "I don't know" so highly. It's small, but it flies on mighty wings. It expands our lives to include spaces within us as well as the outer expanses in which our tiny Earth hangs suspended. If Isaac Newton had never said to himself "I don't know," the apples in his little orchard might have dropped to the ground like hailstones, and, at best, he would have stooped to pick them up and gobble them with gusto. Had my compatriot Marie Sklodowska-Curie never said to herself "I don't know," she probably would have wound up teaching chemistry at some private high school for young ladies from good families, and have ended her days performing that perfectly respectable job. But she kept on saying "I don't know," and these words led her, not just once but twice, to Stockholm, where restless, questing spirits are occasionally rewarded with the Nobel Prize.

Poets, if they're genuine, must also keep repeating "I don't know." Each poem marks an effort to answer this statement; but as soon as the final period hits the page, the poet begins to hesitate, starts to realize that this particular answer was pure makeshift, absolutely inadequate. So poets keep on trying, and sooner or later the consecutive results of their self-dissatisfaction are clipped together with a giant paper clip by literary historians and called their "oeuvres."

I sometimes dream of a situation that can't possibly come true. I audaciously imagine that I have a chance to chat with Ecclesiastes, the author of that moving lament on the vanity of all human endeavors. I bow very deeply before him, because he is one of the greatest poets, for me at least. Then I grab his hand. "There's nothing new under the sun": that's what you wrote, Ecclesiastes. But you yourself were new under the sun. And the poem you created is also new under the sun, since no one wrote it down before you. And all your readers are also new under the sun, since those who lived before you couldn't read your poem. And that cypress under which you're sitting hasn't been growing since the dawn of time. It came into being by way of another cypress similar to yours, but not exactly the same.

And Ecclesiastes, I'd also like to ask: What new thing under the sun are you planning to work on now? A further supplement to thoughts that you've already expressed? Or maybe you're tempted to contradict some of them? In your earlier work you mentioned joy—so what if it's fleeting? So maybe your new-under-the-sun poem will be about joy? Have you taken notes yet, do you have drafts? I doubt that you'll say, "I've written everything down, I've got nothing left to add." There's no poet in the world who can say this, least of all a great poet like yourself.

The world—whatever we might think when we're terrified by its vastness and our impotence, embittered by its indifference to the individual suffering of people, animals and perhaps even plants (for why are we so sure that plants feel no pain?); whatever we might think of its expanses pierced by the rays of stars surrounded by planets that we've just begun to discover, planets already dead, still dead, we just don't know; whatever we might think of this measureless theater to which we've got reserved tickets, but tickets whose lifespan is laughably short, bounded as it is by two arbitrary dates; whatever else we might think of this world—it is astonishing.

But "astonishing" is an epithet concealing a logical trap. We're astonished, after all, by things that deviate from some well-known and universally acknowledged norm, from an obviousness to which we've grown accustomed. But the point is, there is no such obvious world. Our astonishment exists per se and it isn't based on a comparison with something else.

Granted, in daily speech, where we don't stop to consider every word, we all use phrases such as "the ordinary world," "ordinary life," "the ordinary course of events." But in the language of poetry, where every word is weighted, nothing is usual or normal. Not a single stone and not a single cloud above it. Not a single day and not a single night after it. And above all, not a single existence, not anyone's existence in this world.

It looks like poets will always have their work cut out for them.

—Translated from the Polish by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh

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He Couldn't Go On. He Went On.

BY FREDERICK BROWN

Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett by James Knowlson

(Simon and Schuster, 800 pp., $35)

The notion of Samuel Beckett having his life related in great detail calls to mind the second act of *Waiting for Godot*, where Pozzo, fed up with questions about himself and his slave Lucky, bellows: "Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day like any other day, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we'll die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you?" It would be hard to cite a literary oeuvre more opposed in spirit to the biographical enterprise than Beckett's. Throughout it, even if life is seen as the gleaming of an instant, time always weighs heavy. Characters are transformed overnight for reasons beyond our ken, or slowly come undone. In theater that parodies the Aristotelian unities while evoking a world of infinite reiteration, a single day suffices to demonstrate that nothing unfolds and that nobody develops. Marooned in time, people wait. They brazen it out.

During his famous decades, Beckett dodged questions more courteously than Pozzo, but he dodged them all the same. In 1972, James Knowlson, the founder of the Beckett Archive at Reading University, proposed a biography and received no encouragement. Seventeen years passed before he made another overture. By then, old age had disarmed Beckett, an American scholar named Deirdre

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Bair had prized open his past in a big book written with his benign disapproval, Knowlson had become a friend, and all these events combined to elicit a different response. "To biography of me by you it's Yes," was the succinct note that launched Knowlson in 1989. Only six months later Beckett died, though not before answering innumerable "whens" in several dozen interviews conducted at his flat on the Boulevard Saint-Jacques. Knowlson persevered. As the biographer-elect, he availed himself of much new material—letters, diaries, notebooks—and to good effect. *Damned to Fame* is an intelligent, well-furnished life.

Beckett, whose fame is linked above all with the tattered clochards whom he put on stage, saw many things before he ever saw a bum. Born in 1906 to May and William Beckett, he was raised in the insular, privileged world of Foxrock, a Dublin suburb sometimes called "West Briton" for being inhabited mainly by rich Protestants. Beckett's paternal family had in fact emigrated not from England but from France, as Huguenot refugees. After prospering in the manufacture of poplin, they became master builders and helped make Dublin the handsome city it is with several public edifices, notably the National Library and the Adelaide Hospital. Their entrepreneurial vigor lasted long enough to be what propelled William Beckett through life. A large, convivial man, he loved business.

Courtesy Dartmouth College

SAMUEL BECKETT OUTSIDE HIS COTTAGE IN USSY-SUR-MARNE, WINTER 1962

Anything but convivial was May Beckett, née Roe, of old Irish stock, whose father and grandfather had both borne the name Samuel. Educated at a strict Moravian school, where "love feasts" among the "congregation of saints" might have passed for fun, she had known greater adversity than Bill Beckett. The mansion swarming with servants in which she had been brought up vanished halfway through her adolescence when Samuel Roe died, leaving a once-profitable grain business bankrupt. To survive, May became a nurse and, as luck would have it, met Beckett at the Adelaide Hospital. By this marriage she regained her gentlewomanly birthright. Indeed, the name of her father's mansion, Coolrinagh, devolved upon her conjugal house, which she ruled with something of the same obsessive attention to the trappings of status that characterizes royal restorations. Her physique fortified her authority. Tall, elegant and angular, even mannish, she possessed blue eyes that glared holes through the insubordinate. And when her glare didn't prevail, her fierce temper often did. Not that she was devoid of humor; anyone seeing her drive around Foxrock in her stylish little donkey cart would have known that. Nor was she without compassion. But animals elicited it sooner than humans. "Ill-tempered," "difficult," "bottled-up" are how people described May Beckett, who appeared to them as a pillar of fire or a dark cloud. Rage followed close on depression.

Perhaps the Victorian protocol by which May Beckett organized life around her, with punishments for every infraction, served to quell fears of losing social purchase all over again. If she relaxed her grip, she might suffer another fall. And no doubt a passion for control animated her relentless struggle against dirt entering the household. Anyway, this regime shaped very different children. The older Beckett son, Frank, conformed to it as best he could, while the younger, Sam, rebelled. In a society more enamored of sports than of books, where lawn parties around the family tennis court were a Sunday ritual, May's boys seized every opportunity to let loose. They swatted cricket balls and tennis balls and golf balls, and did it better than most.

But Sam, unlike Frank (who inherited his father's business acumen), played with a recklessness that sometimes bordered on the suicidal. There was a tall fir tree from whose crest he would jump with arms outstretched, relying on the lower branches to cushion his fall. There was the high rock at Sandycove from which he would bravely dive into the Irish Sea. "As he grew up, Samuel Beckett seems to have had a positive genius for acquiring cuts and bruises," writes Knowlson. Without discounting the sheer exuberance of childhood, one may wonder whether this self-inflicted damage expressed a protest and a plea, rather than genius. If his mother, the nurse, seldom recognized his emotional needs, could he not at least make her dress his wounds? Did he bloody himself by way of staining her doilies? Genius came later on, with the invention of characters who barely move, or move toward immobility.

The age of 9 marked the beginning of Sam Beckett's serious school days, and his world widened beyond Foxrock. For four years he was a day student at Earlesfort House in Dublin, commuting alone on the suburban line. In 1919 his parents sent him off to the Portora Royal School in Ireland's northern Lake district, a 300-year-old institution that aped Eton, where "character" was much extolled and the building of it was thought to be most effectively accomplished by feats of self-abnegation. There he won respect as a versatile lad who tossed off scatological verse when so disposed, who made the varsity cricket team at 14, who boxed the class bully into submission and gave letter-perfect recitations of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, accompanying himself on the piano. But young Beckett was no extrovert. He grew up bashful, with a mind for intellectual games that offered safe haven from the world—the inner world as well as the one around him. Chess became his passionate entertainment, and Latin almost his best subject. Many Portora boys found him unreachable, or subject to black moods that sometimes enveloped him for days. Yet his aloofness signified something besides contempt. Bound up with his attraction to the grammar of a dead language, to the intricate strategies of chess, and even to the clean, ordered, Elysian landscapes of golf, those remote airs concealed a terror that often kept him awake all night.

In 1923, when the Irish Free State was celebrating its first anniversary amid internecine warfare, Beckett left Portora for Trinity College. Tall and lean, with piercing blue eyes that shied away from

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women, he found the most sympathetic of mentors in Thomas Rudmose-Brown, a professor of Romance languages, nicknamed Ruddy. This bearish, cantankerous man, under whose guidance Beckett read French literature, visited upon him all his enthusiasms, from Ronsard and Racine to Proust and the symbolist poets. At that time university syllabi rarely encompassed anything of the twentieth century. It took independence to assign *A la recherche du temps perdu* and Valery Larbaud's *Barnabooth* and poetry by Léon-Paul Fargue. But Ruddy's unconventionality extended beyond the classroom. A great talker who often had students over for lively parties or mingled with them in pubs, he was an inveterate swearer, and he directed his expletives at every institution demanding self-surrender, at the state as well as the Church. Had extramarital sport not distracted him, Rudmose-Brown might have found time to write a dictionary of received ideas for Ireland. Piety, in whatever cause it asserted itself, infuriated him.

Beckett's intellectual blossoming (another important element of which was the discovery of Dante) did not transform his personality. At Trinity during the day, he spent evenings at home in Coolrinagh, and any demons that may have been exorcised by Ruddy were straightaway reinstated by May. Despite the tempering influence of Bill Beckett, who always showed him great affection, he remained his mother's son. Everything about the clamped-down young man with steel-rimmed spectacles bespoke puritanical self-discipline. He didn't drink or smoke or whore. He felt superior to "the bloody mess." And, like May Beckett, he paid for it. When the lid flew off, as it sometimes did at night, there were panic attacks that became, in due course, literally paralyzing. Or else he would fall silent, much the way his characters do.

A desire for some redemptive human bond may explain his interest in the French writer Jules Romains's theory of "Unanimism." But he addressed that desire more forthrightly by letting himself succumb to women. Ethna MacCarthy, a fellow student at Trinity with intelligence to match her dark-haired beauty, enraptured him. Half the college was likewise smitten, and before long poor Beckett joined her other heartbroken wooers. His next suit proved more successful. It involved a first cousin named Peggy Sinclair, whose mother, May Beckett's sister, had married a Jewish art and antiques dealer. Brought up from age 11 in Kassel, Germany, Peggy never acquired Irish inhibitions. Her vivacity was electrifying. Words streamed out of her "like a conjuror's colored paper," and this chatter delighted the taciturn Beckett, as did her half-foreign world. Finding in Kassel a disheveled, bohemian household utterly unlike Coolrinagh, he made several trips there after graduating from Trinity, much to the consternation of May Beckett, who fretted over Peggy's Jewishness.

If Kassel spelled freedom, all the more did Paris, where Beckett settled in 1929 as Trinity's exchange lecturer at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, France's prime incubator of intellectual talent. With May persistently urging upon him a career in business or finance, his departure from Dublin had been vexed, but not even a well developed aptitude for guilt could cloud the new horizon. Caught up in a whirl of theater, late-night cocktail parties, studio exhibitions, movie-going and coffee-klatsching, with cigarette smoke hanging everywhere, the abstainer soon ceased to be one. "Paris itself was a revelation to Beckett," Knowlson observes. "Coming from the prescriptive gentility of Foxrock and the academic stuffiness of Trinity College, he experienced a great sense of release. . . ."

For someone as constrained as Beckett, it was great good fortune to find the perfect impresario in Tom MacGreevy, a fellow resident of the Ecole Normale. Since arriving one year earlier, this irrepressible Irishman had made himself known to various literary groups, including the Anglo-Irish-American expatriate one that congregated at Sylvia Beach's bookstore on the rue de l'Odéon, Shakespeare and Company. It was through MacGreevy that Beckett met Sylvia Beach, who had published *Ulysses* when no one else dared. And it was through MacGreevy that Beckett met Joyce himself.

Between Beckett and Joyce a warm friendship sprang up, despite the difference in age. Half blind, Joyce needed as much help as he could get in research for *Finnegans Wake*, and Beckett became the seventh of seven young recruits who devoted themselves to him. He read books aloud and diligently reported on others. When the call came he took dictation from Joyce, and at Joyce's behest he wrote an essay about the novel in progress, bringing together (also at Joyce's behest) Dante, Vico and Giordano Bruno. Their encounters were not always justified by some task. On Sunday mornings they sometimes strolled along the quays opposite the Champs de Mars and onto a tree-lined causeway in the middle of the Seine, the Allée des Cygnes. Of these walks, Beckett said:

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There wasn't a lot of conversation between us. I was a young man, very devoted to him, and he liked me.... I was very flattered when he dropped the "Mister." Everybody was "Mister." There were no Christian names, no first names. The nearest you would get to a friendly name was to drop the "Mister." I was never Sam. I was always "Beckett" at the best.

Involving himself in what he saw as an heroic enterprise, Beckett slighted everything else. To combine the roles of amanuensis and exchange scholar, he proposed to write a doctoral dissertation on Joyce and Proust (which ended up as an essay on Proust alone, published by Chatto and Windus). His director at the Ecole Normale discouraged him on the grounds that a live writer and a barely dead one did not qualify for academic consecration.

Time would tell how Beckett profited from all this, but Joyce's fortitude may have impressed even more than his genius. That example kept him company in the dark, groping years ahead, when he often pictured himself as a slug-ridden cabbage, or a slug, or as someone very like Belacqua, Dante's figure of hopeless indolence crouched outside the gates of Purgatory with his head between his knees.

With his head between his knees, Beckett began reading Schopenhauer for, in his words, "an intellectual justification of unhappiness." It was 1930 and he sailed home, unhappily, to teach French literature at Trinity College. As those who knew him well must have observed, two years abroad had given sharper teeth to the demons that tore him apart. Vain and vulnerable, he regarded the world from too high up or too low down, using wit to stave off feeling. Esoteric persiflage was armor for him. It marked his relationship with people, just as later it influenced his shaping of characters. But this manic, convoluted intellectualism had a reverse side in fantasies of catatonia. It was as if the choice were to rage or to sleep, to baffle or to "switch off the glare of understanding" (his words again). Either way, lecture podiums made him acutely uncomfortable. "His shy, diffident manner did little to disguise his disdain for the shallowness, paucity of interest, and lack of literary sensitivity of most of those he was teaching," writes Knowlson.

Midway through his three-year appointment Beckett resigned from Trinity and, ashamed of having thus disappointed everyone, fled to Germany. After several weeks at Peggy Sinclair's he found refuge in Paris, where friendships were soon resumed, particularly his relationship with Joyce. As always, Joyce loomed large for Beckett. Wanting a literary father to legitimize him, the younger man mimicked the older one at every turn. He smoked like Joyce, slouched down like Joyce and punned like Joyce in his first long work of fiction, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, a mordant roman à clef written during that sojourn but published only many years later, after his death. Broke except for the translation fees paid by avant-garde reviews interested in Surrealist poetry, Beckett had hoped to support himself with *Dream*. Even so, he might have gone on scrounging had not a mad Russian émigré assassinated President Paul Doumer. Foreigners without residence permits were banished from France, and in August 1932 the fugitive son "crawled home" to Coolrinagh. He couldn't remember himself upright.

During the next seventeen months Belacqua discovered hell. While his father took his inchoate ambitions seriously, his mother nagged him day after day to find employment. Lonelier than ever, Beckett complained that he would be there till death, always "creeping along genteel roads on a stranger's bike." Friends in town, above all the painter Jack Yeats, offered welcome relief from Foxrock. But for the most part he kept to himself, reading Henry Fielding, fumbling through Mozart's piano sonatas, writing a few stories, harvesting letters of rejection and sometimes getting dead drunk, the better to humiliate himself or his mother or both. May's tirade ceased only when Beckett landed in the hospital with his whole system poisoned by cysts. Then disaster struck. No sooner had he finished convalescing from surgery than his father died of heart failure. For the young writer, who loved Bill Beckett deeply, it was a huge loss. To make matters worse, May transformed Coolrinagh into a family shrine, presenting herself, behind permanently drawn blinds, as a heroine of grief. "Up to the eaves in the vile worms of melancholy observance" is how Beckett evoked the scene.

Grief revived the panic attacks that had bedeviled him since adolescence. Like his father's heart, his own seemed utterly unreliable, pounding against his chest or doing wild jigs. Insomnia alternated with nightmares, but more frightening still was a psychogenic paralysis that suddenly stopped him dead in his tracks.

I'll tell you how it was [he told Knowlson]. I was walking down Dawson Street. And I felt I couldn't go on. It was a strange experience I can't really describe. I found I couldn't go on moving. So I went into the nearest pub and got a drink just to stay still. And I felt I needed help.

Psychotherapy seemed imperative, and Beckett, who couldn't arrange for it in Ireland, where the practice was illegal, decided to seek treatment at the Tavistock Clinic in London. May Beckett paid. With a minimal allowance from his father's estate and no prospects of income from a book of short stories accepted by Chatto and Windus, *More Pricks Than Kicks*, he depended on her financially.

The Tavistock Clinic, which eschewed methodological dogma, had him consult Dr. Wilfrid Bion. They liked each other, and, on the couch three times a week under Bion's scrutiny, Beckett dug deep for almost two years. Indeed, he dug deep enough to retrieve—so he later claimed—memories of agonized confinement in his mother's womb. It was a period of self-immersion: faithfully recording dreams and analyzing them, studying psychoanalytic theory, reading Elizabethan drama and seventeenth-century Occasionalist philosophy and Rabelais and Robert Burton and Rousseau and Spinoza (in Latin), taking long walks through London, which he hated as only a patronized Irishman could. It also turned out to be a period of intense creative effort. Everything that he did and learned became material for elaborating adventures in the psychic hinterland of his first major anti-hero, Murphy, who calls himself a "chronic emeritus."

If Beckett thought that psychotherapy would help him "control the panic" when he left London late in 1935 and reestablished himself, against Bion's advice, at Coolrinagh, May gave him brilliant opportunities to test that thesis. After she had nursed him through pleurisy, the "old round of unhappenings," as he once described their warfare, began again in great earnest. Stoking each other up, they quarreled over things large and small. Indeed, every dawning day was another occasion for complicit rage. Not only did accusations of fecklessness rain on him but they rained from beyond the grave, as May ventriloquized in her husband's name. With her husband's fortune she doled out money in ever smaller amounts, allowing her son just enough to let him gag on his unsuccess. Could he find no purchase, then, outside Foxrock? Unfortunately, pubs comforted him better than the Dublin literary world. "Living in Ireland was confinement for Sam," wrote his cousin Morris Sinclair.

He came up against the Irish censorship. He could not swim in the Irish literary scene or in Free State politics the way W.B. Yeats did.... But the big city, the larger horizon, offered the freedom of comparative anonymity (Belacqua seeking the pub where he

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was unknown) and stimulation instead of Dublin oppression, jealousy, intrigue and gossip.

A long trip through Germany in 1936, during which he observed Nazism firsthand, brought matters to a head. On his return, he suffered massive anxiety attacks that routed his newly acquired understanding of them. And when brother Frank decided to marry, Beckett lost himself in binges, as if crazed by the prospect of having to bear the full brunt of his mother's obloquy or her "savage loving." A violent scene with her gave him the decisive cue. In October 1938 he left Ireland for Paris. He would never return, except to visit.

Two events might suggest that a wry Providence smiled on his expatriation. The first occurred in December when he learned that his novel *Murphy*, after wandering forlornly from one London publisher to another and suffering rebuffs farther afield in New York, had found a home at Routledge. The second occurred several weeks later on a Paris street in the wee hours. While walking some Irish friends home, Beckett was accosted by a pimp who took exception to being shooed away and plunged a knife into his chest, narrowly missing his heart.

Overnight, word reached Dublin, where the incident became headline news. From around Paris people gathered at the Broussais Hospital in numbers that testified to the affection that this man inspired. It was a strange welcome party for an oddly magnetic loner, and it included May Beckett, over from Foxrock, whose ministering presence moved him deeply. James Joyce brought him yellow roses and also paid the expenses of his private room. Nora Joyce baked him a custard pudding. Friends literary and non-literary appeared, including Peggy Guggenheim, with whom he had begun an affair. Even the Irish ambassador dropped by.

His most important visitor was someone he hardly knew, Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil, a pianist who had met him en passant during his lectureship at the Ecole Normale. Six years older than Beckett, she set her cap for him with a steadfastness that ultimately proved more than equal to his fear of being invaded, hectored, manipulated. And he, always preferring strong women, involved himself at last (though very tentatively) with one who never doubted his genius. "There is a French girl ... whom I am fond of, dispassionately, and who is very good to me," he confided to MacGreevy in April 1939. "The hand will not be overbid." What may have fortified this relationship, which became lifelong, was his decision to try writing in French. A new identity needed a mother right for it.

What else may have fortified their relationship were the perilous circumstances of the life they led after 1940 in Occupied France. Beckett had always been deaf to politics, but Nazism horrified him, and on September 1, 1941, with his Jewish friends disappearing every day or groaning under the infamous *Statut des Juifs*, he joined the French Resistance as an operative in the "Gloria" network, collecting military intelligence. Reports from the field arrived higgledy-piggledy, often on scraps of paper. Beckett's task was to sift through them, organize them, translate them, make careful précis and finally have them microfilmed for a clandestine voyage to London inside matchboxes or cigarettes. This he did until the Gestapo, fully informed by a traitor, arrested many of his colleagues in August 1942. He and Suzanne fled south across the line of demarcation and fetched up at Roussillon, where they survived as best they could for more than two years, playing a marginal role in local guerrilla warfare after the Germans overran southern France, but mainly just lying low. There Beckett wrote *Watt*.

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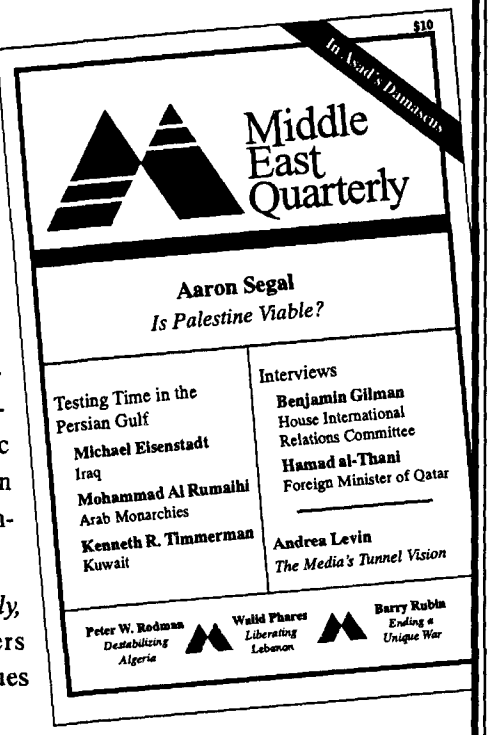

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The man who emerged from that netherworld in 1945 had lost much of his former asperity. On some level he had made peace with himself during the war, when survival hinged on trust. And he had done so in more ways than one, for his inner truce produced not only a gentler spirit but a firmer artistic identity. The personal vision by which he would thenceforth set store became clear in the immediate aftermath of the war. As his sarcastic persona withered away, so did his impulse to wear a doctoral cap. "I realized that Joyce had gone as far as one could in the direction of knowing more, [being] in control of one's material," he told Knowlson (implying perhaps that Joyce's death in 1941 had made it easier for him to grasp the distinction). "He was always adding to it; you have only to look at his proofs to see that. I realized that my own way was an impoverishment, in lack of knowledge and in taking away, in subtracting rather than adding." Though quite unable to make a Pascalian wager on God's existence, he cherished a distinctly Pascalian image of man as "nonknower" and "non-can-er." And that image, now in sharp focus, was to preside over his work. Indeed, it gave a man who had always had trouble rising much before noon boundless energy. Between 1947 and 1950 Beckett wrote, in French, the trilogy *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*. And, in the midst of it, *Waiting for Godot* came tumbling out of him.

Energy to write was not accompanied by the will to find a publisher for his writing, but Suzanne performed that task with fierce determination. After much knocking on doors all over Paris, she found the elusive publisher in 21-year-old Jérôme Lindon, who held sway at a firm born of the Resistance movement, Les Editions de Minuit. Suzanne also persuaded a young actor-director named Roger Blin to read *Waiting for Godot*, and the enthusiasm sparked by that encounter resulted in the play being produced at a little Left Bank theater, the Théâtre de Babylone. The year was 1952, and from then on Beckett found himself "damned to fame."

Some audiences jeered, but many acclaimed the laconic eloquence of a work that voiced, better than *soi-disant* existentialist theater, the despair and the moral perplexity besetting postwar Europe. With this reception, and with more money at his disposal than he could give away (something he liked to do), his life was transformed. Admirers and petitioners of every description materialized, negotiations for production rights became familiar noise, and to get away from it all he would flee to a cottage on the Marne at Ussy, forty miles east of Paris. Meanwhile, an intense love affair played itself out in secret rendezvous. What this ebullience didn't produce was a second finished play. Taken up with the chore of translating *Malone meurt* and *L'Innommable*, he felt lost, he said, in "the wastes and wilds of self-translation." And that feeling of self-loss was exacerbated by deaths in the family. His mother had passed away in 1950 after suffering from Parkinson's disease. In 1954, his brother Frank, who had always been a great protector, developed lung cancer. Beckett spent terrible months at Killiney, helping him die.

When at last the creative urge roused him from depression, Beckett wrote, as quickly as he had written his trilogy, those three or four remarkable plays that extend the range of *Waiting for Godot*. In 1956 it was *Fin de Partie*, which he translated as *Endgame*. In 1958 he brought forth *Krapp's Last Tape* and, during the following year, *Comment c'est: How It Is*. It took eight months of intermittent labor to complete *Happy Days* after his vision of a woman buried waist high crystallized in October 1960. *All That Fall* and *Play* were smaller pups in this famous litter.

Fame affected Beckett's private life, as Suzanne came to feel that her role had been preempted by devoted auxiliaries. He needed her less for moral support and, what caused greater pain, satisfied other needs with other women, seeking out, in particular, the company of Barbara Bray, an attractive, highly cultivated young script editor at the BBC who subsequently moved to Paris. But Beckett, ever the loyal stranger, would not leave Suzanne. On the contrary, he married her in secret nuptials at Folkstone, Kent, when it became clear that if he died she might inherit nothing under French law, which ignored the rights of common-law wives. By then, 1961, they had installed themselves at 38 Boulevard Saint-Jacques, occupying separate quarters within the same flat. There they remained, faithful to this arrangement, until death buried them together several blocks away, in the Montparnasse cemetery. "I owe everything to Suzanne," Beckett told Knowlson ruefully.

Flabbergasted by honors but too courteous to refuse them, he accepted an honorary Doctor of Letters from Trinity College in 1959 and ten years later the Nobel Prize. These laurels did not distract him from the fundamental enterprise of struggling with language to get "below the surface" at what he called "the authentic weakness of being." A greater distraction was poor health. His teeth rotted. His hand went stiff with Dupuytren's contracture. In 1968, he almost died of an abscess on the lung, which a homeopathic physician in whom Suzanne placed absolute faith had failed to diagnose. Several years later, cataracts were removed from his dimmed eyes. His skeletal body suffered the depredations of an ascetic regime. It was as if the paring down he practiced upon prose was being inflicted upon the man himself, organ by organ. Life became an excruciating tale of "lessness." And throughout it all he smoked and drank, and continued to smoke when emphysema made breathing itself difficult. He breathed his last on December 22, 1989, five months after Suzanne had gone.

Knowlson's book has the deficiencies of its virtues. Ample in every way, it tends to dwell equally on details of unequal importance and thus, at times, to lose focus, blurring the portrait or flattening it out. Along with this indefatigable comprehensiveness goes a reluctance to interpret what material is known, to suggest how things may have hung together in Beckett's mind, to connect the dots, as it were. In 1931, for example, when Beckett was at Foxrock recuperating from pleurisy, there occurred a terrible row with his mother, who drove him from the house in disgust after coming across something he had written. (It isn't known what.) Several months later, when the National Gallery of Ireland bought a Perugino Pietà, he became obsessed with it and wrote to MacGreevy:

> A clean-shaven, potent Xist and a passion of tears for the waste. The most mystical constituent is the ointment pot that was probably added by Raffaela. Rottenly hung in rotten light behind this thick shop window, so that a total view of it is impossible, and full of grotesque amendments. But a lovely cheery Xist full of sperm, and the woman [the Madonna] touching his thighs and mourning his secrets.

Were his repeated trips to the museum inspired not only by love of art but by fantasies of martyred, incestuous reconciliation? And does this scene not strangely prefigure the one that actually took place in 1938 at the Broussais Hospital, where May, tearful and contrite, doted over her stabbed son? Beckett wrote of that occasion: "I felt great gusts of affection and esteem and compassion for her when she was over. What a relationship!"

Much more could have been made as well of Beckett's literary affinities, which included at various times Rousseau, Sade and Stendhal. One wonders whether in

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his early predilection for Racine he was already responding to the vision of a solipsistic world, without communality or law or faith, from which heroes have vanished. Still, Knowlson illuminates more than one dark passage in Beckett's life. His biography lacks the verve and the psychological aptness of Deirdre Bair's, but it sets the record straight. That is a large accomplishment.

FREDERICK BROWN's *Zola: A Life*, has recently been published in paperback by Johns Hopkins University Press.

Good Riddance

BY JOSEPH FINDER

Dossier: The Secret History of Armand Hammer by Edward Jay Epstein

(Random House, 418 pp., $30)

I.

"The greatest humbug of all," wrote P.T. Barnum in 1865,

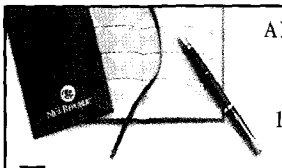
> is the man who believes—or pretends to believe—that everything and everybody are humbugs. We sometimes meet a person who professes that there is no virtue; that every man has his price, and every woman hers; that any statement from anybody is just as likely to be false as true and that the only way to decide which, is to consider whether truth or a lie was likely to have paid best in that particular case.... Poor fellow! He has exposed his own nakedness. Instead of showing that others are rotten inside, he has proved that he is.

Barnum's genius was to recognize how peculiarly American this type had come to be. In *The Confidence-Man*, written a few years earlier, Melville even implied that the success of the con man in America speaks well of America: a society that can be conned cannot be cynical. This was a little optimistic, at least about the century to come.

It is fitting that the greatest confidence man of the twentieth century emerged from its greatest political and philosophical conflict. Armand Hammer, industrialist and chairman of Occidental Petroleum, or Oxy, best known for his seven decades of dealings with the Soviet Union, died in 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall. He was, as is now confirmed by Edward Jay Epstein's book, a Soviet agent who secretly worked for the KGB in its various incarnations, laundered money for Soviet intelligence and the Comintern, and transformed Occidental Petroleum into a multi-billion-dollar behemoth by means of lies and bribes. He was a charlatan and a thug who sprinkled around enough laundered money to persuade a gullible public that he was a "philanthropist" and a "humanitarian."

The obituaries that appeared on the front pages of newspapers around the country the morning after Hammer's death were his most breathtaking achievement. Virtually all of them could have been written in Hammer's public-relations boiler room, a sizable and well funded arm of Oxy. Writing in *The New York Times*, Eric Pace eulogized Hammer, "who long sought peace between the United States and the Soviet Union and financed research for a cancer cure." According to *The Washington Post*, Hammer had "won world renown for his accomplishments in ... diplomacy and philanthropy." *Time* called him a "tireless spokesman for better U.S.-Soviet relations," while the Associated Press exalted him as a "tireless crusader for international peace who improved the human condition by investing millions in education, medicine and the arts." For *The Boston Globe* Hammer was a "tireless crusader for world peace," and Senator Edward Kennedy insisted that "we could not have ended the cold war without him." The *Times* of London recalled: "He was the man who singlehandedly helped ease the antagonism between Russia and America from the 1920s through to the late 1980s."

An obituary, of course, is not a genre of unvarnished truth-telling. (Alger Hiss's overly polite obituaries weren't nearly so nice, but he wasn't nearly so rich.) Who, indeed, wishes to speak ill of the newly dead? But, please, hold the agitprop. By the time of Hammer's death, at least some of the truth about his life was available to any journalist who bothered to look for it. But our allegedly cynical press



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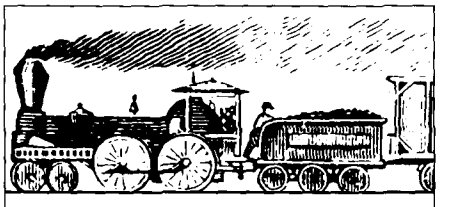

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preferred the more appealing mythology that Hammer had laboriously created himself and which, by the time of his death, had spread like an oil slick.

James Jesus Angleton, the CIA's legendary chief of counterintelligence, told me in 1981 that Armand Hammer was an agent of Soviet intelligence. Angleton also believed, of course, that Henry Kissinger was a Soviet agent and that the Sino-Soviet split was a sham, so I listened with skepticism. His tip seemed quaint, a bit of cold war kitsch. But he had been watching Hammer since the late 1950s, and in 1963 his prize Soviet defector, Anatoly Golitsyn, had told him about one of the Soviets' most secret assets, known as "the Capitalist Prince." Golitsyn didn't know the mole's real name, but he had the contours of a biography: son of an American millionaire, the Prince came to Russia on business in the 1920s, returned to the United States in the early 1930s, was reactivated in the late 1950s and left a son behind in Moscow who was used by the Soviets as leverage. At first Angleton suspected Averell Harriman, who had done some business in Russia in 1925 and was the son of a railroad tycoon, but Harriman otherwise didn't fit the profile. Angleton turned his attention to Hammer, who fit just about perfectly. (Or almost perfectly: it was Hammer's brother who had left a son behind in Moscow.) Angleton had access to a great deal of intelligence, but the Soviet archives would not be open for another decade, so he didn't have it down cold. It turns out that he was right.

ARMAND HAMMER BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the world of espionage, an agent or a case officer in deep cover must have what is called a legend, a plausible false identity and false occupation to conceal his true operational activities. The legend that Armand Hammer devised was so simple it was brilliant: he would pose as a businessman, a capitalist, a tycoon. The legend was ingenious because it was not a legend. It was true. And it nicely played upon the popular Manichean assumption that communists and capitalists differed not in degree but in kind, that they were the irreconcilable antitheses of modern history, that a man interested in making money just couldn't be a communist. What better proof could there be of Hammer's true-blue status than the fortune he amassed?

In truth, Armand Hammer was not a communist. His only overt political act seems to have been joining the Party (then the Socialist Labor Party) in 1916, as a high-school student—a fact that he concealed, and angrily denied, all his life. And there was nothing idealistic about this affiliation of his youth. Hammer worked secretly for the Soviet government because it was the family business, and because they buttered his bread. He was a Soviet agent, but out of expedience. He was certainly no lover of socialism, or of any principle. He seems to have had no political allegiances whatsoever.

"Only in his later years," recalled the *Times* of London, "did he shake off the suspicion ... that he was some kind of communist agent.... [Hammer] did not share his father's socialist sentiments. He was interested in making money, not building socialism." That obituarist never met Julius Hammer, Armand's father, for whom the phrase "Babbitt Bolshevik" seems to have been invented. Julius Hammer, to be fair, was a complex fellow, at once a genuinely committed socialist and a rather aggressive businessman. He was a rich man and a radical leftist, a friend and a supporter of Lenin, a founder of the Socialist Labor Party, which in 1919 became the American Communist Party. He was also a physician and the owner of a pharmaceutical company that was half-owned, and entirely controlled, by the Soviet Union.

He was the Party's financial angel. When the new Soviet government sent its first ambassador to the United States, long before the United States recognized the new state, Julius paid the unofficial embassy's rent and became its financial adviser. When Julius's first child was born in 1898, he named him Armand, for the arm-and-hammer symbol of the Socialist Labor Party. Julius was fervently committed to building the great locomotive of Soviet communism, so long as he didn't have to get engine grease under his manicured fingernails. He and his family lived in New York with two full-time servants and a chauffeur. His socialist comrades, including Bertram Wolfe and Jay Lovestone, regarded Julius Hammer with mingled awe and contempt.

In 1921, when Julius Hammer was imprisoned for a botched abortion (which, Epstein maintains, Armand performed while in medical school), his 23-year-old son was sent to Moscow in his father's stead to launch a new phase of the family's Russian operations, a mining business in the Urals. Never mind that none of the Hammers knew the first thing about mining. Lenin's idea was that if American capitalists could show the world how much money they were making in Russia, the rest of the greedy capitalists would follow, and Western governments would drop their onerous trade restrictions against the Soviets. It didn't matter if the mine made money or not. It was just for show. "Let it be a concession," Lenin instructed, "even if a fictitious one." It was "important politically."

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But there was more to this hoax than politics. Lenin summoned Armand Hammer to the Kremlin to talk business, and then informed him that the project would be controlled by the Soviet government, under the direct supervision of Feliks Dzerzhinski, the head of the Soviet secret police. Why? Because the other purpose of the business was to create a shell company, including a banking operation in New York City, to transfer money back and forth between New York and Moscow. Armand Hammer's business venture was to be used as an illegal financial conduit to fund Soviet activities, including espionage, in the United States. This was so important to Lenin that the very last message he sent Stalin, marked "urgent" and "secret," was about the Hammers, whom he ordered to be given "particular support."

Epstein is not the first to reveal that Armand Hammer laundered money for the Soviet government. In 1995, Harvey Klehr and John Haynes, in *The Secret World of American Communism*, published Comintern documents showing payments from the Comintern directly to Hammer in Berlin. But Epstein's documentation of this subject is by far the most complete. In his research in the Soviet archives, he uncovered letters between the Hammers and Trotsky (in one, marked "absolutely confidential," Trotsky orders the use of Armand Hammer as a Soviet "scout and business propagandist"), proving clandestine money transfers to the Communist Party in New York, laundered by the Hammers and thus untraceable. Epstein has also obtained definitive proof that the Hammers secretly channeled money to agents of the OGPU (a forerunner of the KGB) in the United States, and to clandestine Soviet organizations in London and Berlin as well. Their money-laundering operation was so mammoth that it was directly supervised by Genrikh Yagoda, the deputy chairman of the OGPU. Epstein also establishes for the first time that the Hammers were used as conduits for money from Moscow to set up Soviet espionage operations in the United States.

Communism was good to Armand Hammer and his family. He, his parents and his two brothers lived in Moscow in high style for a decade. (Julius Hammer was released from prison in 1923 and arrived in Moscow in time to celebrate May Day.) Their mine in the Urals was losing money at the rate of $20,000 a month—all their Russian businesses lost money—but the Soviet government provided them with a thirty-room mansion and eight full-time servants and two chauffeurs. They were constantly in debt, and yet the Russians allowed them to live large while ordinary Muscovites starved. Since the enterprise was designed in part for show, and in part to channel funds, the Hammers were not expected to make any money. Still, it was important for the Hammers to maintain the illusion that they made a fortune there. Ensconced in baronial splendor in Moscow, Julius shunned all American communists who came to visit: the family had to keep up the appearance of being wholesome and unambiguous capitalists. They made a point of entertaining every celebrity who came to visit Moscow, among them Will Rogers, H.G. Wells, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks and Gene Tunney.

Armand Hammer discovered early that American journalists and politicians prefer the "cynical" explanation to the complicated truth. Thus, on his visits back to the United States, he posed as a ruthless capitalist exploiting the Communists' weakness, a charade that he kept up all his life. In 1921 he gathered prominent businessmen at the Commodore Hotel in New York, passed around a letter from Lenin and told the panting bunch that Lenin had confided to him he was giving up on communism and wanted the capitalists to come in and run the Soviet economy.

By 1930, Hammer's father had ceded the family business to him. He left Russia, broke, to begin the next phase of his career: selling confiscated Russian art and other merchandise in the United States, including counterfeit Fabergé eggs (Fauxbergé, as they came to be known) that Armand himself faked, using signature stamps seized by the Soviets from the Fabergé workshops. The goods, owned by the Soviets and sold by Hammer on commission, also included Torah scrolls looted from synagogues, costume jewelry, samovars ransacked from merchants' homes, as well as a lot of miscellaneous junk. Hammer billed it the "Romanoff treasure."

In fact, it made him virtually no money, and was simply another means to transfer hard currency to Moscow. To boost sales, Hammer published an autobiography, *The Quest of the Romanoff Treasure*, which was ghost-written by that champion mythmaker Walter Duranty, the Moscow correspondent of *The New York Times* and an apologist for Stalin. In it, Hammer concocted a fake biography, depicting his first trip to Moscow as half-tourism, half-humanitarian, and leaving out all mention of his father. The book is propaganda at its cheesiest. Hammer compares Lenin to Christ, praises Dzerzhinski, the murderous founder of the Soviet secret police, as a "remarkable man," and calls Stalin "unassuming." A photo of one of Lenin's letters to Armand is reproduced, but an incriminating paragraph concerning Hammer's father and other "comrades" in American jails is masked with a blank piece of paper.

II.

It may seem improbable, in purely actuarial terms, that Hammer made it through the upheavals of seven decades, through McCarthyism and the House Un-American Activities Committee witch-hunts and J. Edgar Hoover, without being exposed as a Soviet operative. But Hammer knew how to work the levers of power and access. He learned how to buy politicians, how to use the machinery of public relations, how to dazzle with empty talk, how to cajole and threaten.

Still, Hammer became increasingly fearful that his career as a money-launderer for the Soviets would be discovered. Hoover had been on to the Hammers since 1921, as a young investigator in the Department of Justice, even before there was an FBI. His informers told him that Armand Hammer was a secret courier for the Soviets. He had ordered Armand Hammer's mail intercepted, his New York offices searched. He had long considered the Hammers "a rotten bunch." In 1952 Hammer learned that the FBI had strong suspicions about him, and he called in a favor from one of the politicians in his pocket, a key FBI supporter in the Senate: arrange a formal FBI interrogation to address the allegations head on, and defuse them.

Hammer's meeting with the FBI agents appears to have been a virtuoso performance. He drafted an autobiography in the form of a long memorandum, explaining everything innocently. He blamed his father for everything that looked suspicious, and he took advantage of the gaping holes that had emerged in the three decades that had elapsed since he had started working for the Russians. By 1952, all possible witnesses were dead, and the Soviets were certainly not going to open their records. Hammer told the FBI that his father's communism had been a "sore subject" with him, concealing the fact that he had been a Party member himself. Asked about documents that showed the Soviets giving him a great deal of money, he explained it as a business debt that he traveled to Moscow to collect.

He withstood four hours of interrogation masterfully, stressing his commit-

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ment to the religion of capitalism, the "principle of private property." Then, in a deft and typical Hammer touch, he gave as character references a number of congressmen, including Albert Gore Sr. of Tennessee and the chairman of the House committee that oversaw the FBI. This left Hoover with a problem. Hammer's claims were demonstrably untrue, and the FBI had evidence that indicated Hammer had been a courier, had laundered money for the Russians and had recruited and positioned Soviet spies; but this evidence was all obtained by the FBI in the 1920s through black-bag jobs, break-ins and the like. It was not admissible in a court of law. Weighing that fact, and taking into account Hammer's political support, Hoover closed the case against him. The one cynic had checkmated the other.

Schooled by the Soviets in money-laundering and the artful transfer of funds, Hammer became the Heifetz of bribery. He hired shadowy businessmen with multiple passports—"consultants," they called themselves—as intermediaries to do most of the dirty work. But Epstein reports that Hammer also liked to do some of it himself. He loved to enter hotel rooms with attaché cases stuffed with cash, loved to watch the marks salivate and their eyes gleam. He set up shell companies to leach money from his own company, Occidental Petroleum, through fake sales of oil, thereby accumulating his own slush fund. Cash was brought from Switzerland to his safe deposit box in Los Angeles by the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The deal that built Oxy into one of the world's largest firms—at one time it was the fourteenth-largest industrial company in the United States—was accomplished by bribing the associates of King Idris of Libya in the early 1960s to give a massive oil-drilling concession to the tiny oil company. The King needed a way to explain to the majors, and to the rest of the world, why little Oxy had received the concession, and Hammer himself dreamed up the cover story: "philanthropy." He announced that the King had been moved by his altruistic offer to help that parched land and its people out of their "medieval poverty" by drilling for water. (Needless to say, he did no such thing.)

Hammer understood early that there is often no distinction between bribes and political contributions. He would make "campaign contributions" to needy or rapacious politicians even when they weren't running for anything. Some time ago I discovered a White House memo of 1966 informing Lyndon Johnson that Armand Hammer wanted to see him and had "25" he wanted to "do without": $25,000, presumably, and in a nonelection year. And Hammer was ever on the alert for politicians in hock. Once he tried to buy the First National City Bank of Washington, D.C., to get his hands on the financial data of politicians who banked there, particularly those who had loans outstanding. (He failed, but it was a good idea; the infamous Bank of Credit and Commerce International tried the same thing years later.)

In one way or another, money purchased Hammer access to almost every president since Roosevelt. A presidential acquaintanceship could mean expediting an international deal, or at the very least burnishing his reputation. He got to Franklin Roosevelt, for instance, by giving, or "lending," generously to his son Jimmy. For years he maintained that John F. Kennedy sent him to meet with Khrushchev to help ease U.S.-Soviet tensions, but in fact Kennedy would not see him; Hammer managed only a brief chat with Kennedy's Secretary of Commerce, but that was good enough to concoct the tale. There were those, wise to his tricks, who tried to block him, but he always managed to find a way around. For a time Zbigniew Brzezinski vigilantly kept Hammer away from Jimmy Carter, but Hammer eventually got through by giving large sums to the Democratic Party.

Ronald Reagan was the toughest target. Hammer tried a number of approaches. There was the time that he found out when Reagan was scheduled to get a haircut at his barber in Los Angeles and booked himself, at the same hour, in the next chair. To no avail. Giving to Nancy Reagan's White House redecoration project didn't do the trick either. Epstein documents the comic lengths to which Hammer went to insinuate himself into Reagan's circle, flying around the country to political functions where Reagan was scheduled to appear. But Reagan was suspicious of Hammer's Soviet ties, and pointedly ignored him. Eventually, though, Hammer found a crack in the wall. David Murdock was a Reagan friend and a collector of Arabian horses, and Hammer arranged for the Russians to give Murdock a rare Arabian stallion—and then he arranged for Oxy to buy Murdock's company, Iowa Beef Processors, at a price significantly higher than the company's market value. Murdock did his part by clearing up "misunderstandings" about Hammer in the Reagan White House.

Hammer's eagerness to buy White House access almost landed him in jail. In 1972 he gave $100,000 in laundered cash to the Committee to Re-elect the President, hush money for the Watergate burglars. Meeting with Nixon in the White House, Hammer announced proudly and unsubtly that "I'm in the Hundred-Thousand-Dollar Club." It was only because of the Watergate scandal that he was caught. He lied to the Senate Watergate Committee about it, as well as to the FBI. Later, in order to keep the FBI from investigating the source of his laundered money, Hammer was forced to plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge of making illegal campaign contributions. When it was time for the sentencing, facing the possibility of a jail term, Hammer told the judge that he was dying. He checked himself into the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Los Angeles and asked that the sentencing be held there: if he left the hospital, he said, he might die of a heart attack. The judge denied his request. So Hammer arrived in court in a wheelchair, with a medical team of doctors and attendants who attached his body to a heart monitor and stood by with an oxygen tent at the ready. He was sentenced to a year's probation and a $3,000 fine. As soon as he left the courtroom, he checked out of the hospital, discarded his wheelchair and was back in his office in a matter of hours.

III.

"The only reason I make money," Hammer was fond of saying, "is so I can give it away." This would have come as news to Hammer's immediate family. When his older brother Harry died in 1970, Hammer, the executor, bilked the widow's family out of the Mississippi homestead that had been in her family for six genera-

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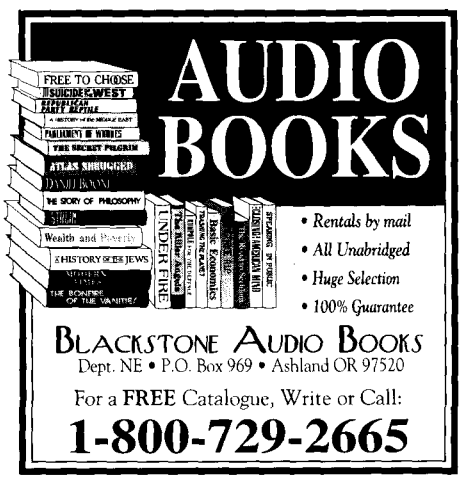

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tions, for a profit of $22,000. When his younger brother Victor died in 1985, leaving his invalid widow in a nursing home, Hammer (by then a millionaire several times over) filed a claim against virtually the full amount of the modest estate, claiming that over the years he had lent Victor the money for medical expenses. He then cut off the monthly payments to the nursing home, leaving Victor's widow destitute. Only when news of what he'd done began to leak out to the press did he back off. His second wife's insistence that Hammer lived "by the philosophy that money can buy everything and everybody" might be dismissed as ex-wifely rancor, but it is less easy to ignore the actions of his "beloved" third and last wife, Frances, who apparently distrusted him increasingly throughout their marriage and secretly kept a record of every loan she ever made to him—and then, shortly before her death, tipped her niece off to the cache, which proved he had defrauded her.

If charity didn't begin at Armand Hammer's home, then what of the countless millions that the "philanthropist" was believed to have given to charity? It turns out, Epstein reports, that Hammer promised far more than he delivered, and when he did pay he rarely, if ever, gave a gift out of his own pocket. He used monies from Occidental Petroleum, which handsomely funded the Armand Hammer Foundation. The rest came from his carefully laundered slush fund kept in a secret Swiss account, cash that had been illegally diverted from Oxy.

His generosity with his ill-gotten gains always had an ulterior, self-aggrandizing purpose. When Hammer learned that one of Prince Charles's favorite causes was the United World Colleges, he gave $5 million, mostly in laundered funds, and in return asked Charles to nominate him for the Nobel Prize. (Hammer was serious, but Charles never obliged.) When Hammer thought he stood a chance of convincing Reagan to grant him a pardon for his illegal Watergate contributions, he pledged $1.3 million to the Reagan Library. When the pardon didn't come, neither did the money. No doubt a good deal of philanthropy is motivated by a desire for public glory, but Hammer took this to an extreme: he tried to win the glory without putting down the cash. His pattern was to announce a gift and renege after the applause died down. After his death, scores of organizations to which he had pledged millions of dollars—including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (which promised to put his name on one of its

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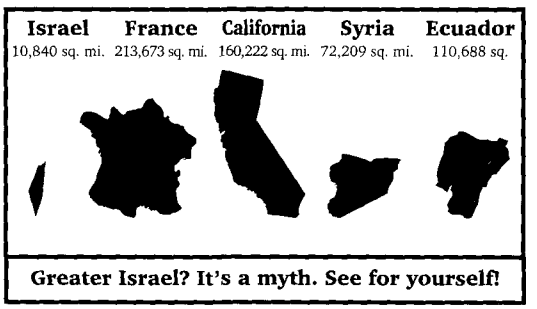
There are strident requests by the Arab countries, by the Palestinians, and indeed by much of the world that Israel should once and for all abandon its dream of a "Greater Israel." Israel's alleged expansionist ambitions have long been a staple of Arab anti-Israel propaganda. But what does it really mean? Does it have any relation to reality?

What are the facts?

Stripes on the Flag. Arab propaganda has it that the two stripes on the flag of Israel, above and below the star of David, represent the Nile and the Euphrates River, respectively, and signify Israel's expansionist desire, to form an "empire" that would supposedly reach from Cairo to Baghdad. But that has no basis in fact, of course. Nowhere in any documents of the Jewish state, in any statement by even the most "radical" spokesman can reference to anything like that be found.

Israel's Borders. "Palestine," part of the Ottoman Empire before World War I, came under British mandate after that war. The Golan Heights were part of Palestine. Israel's current borders are the result of the 1948 War of Independence, in which six Arab armies invaded the new-born state, but were utterly defeated, and the 1967 Six-Day War, in which those same armies once again invaded Israel. In that war, Israel conquered the Gaza Strip, the vast Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. And Israel also *repossessed* the provinces of Judea/Sumaria, (the "West Bank"), and the eastern part of Jerusalem, which had been occupied by the Jordanians nineteen years earlier, when they invaded the just new-born Jewish state. In order to achieve peace with Egypt, Israel returned to it all of the Sinai. Israel is and has always been prepared to grant full autonomy to the Arabs living in Judea/Sumaria. It is clear to all knowledgeable in military matters that, for immutable strategic reason, Israel cannot for any foreseeable future abandon or yield military control of Judea/Sumaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights.



Greater Israel? It's a myth. See for yourself!

The Myth of Greater Israel. Israel is one of the smallest countries in the world. Most people don't realize how small it really is. One wonders whether those who keep talking about "Greater Israel" and who wish to pressure Israel to divest itself of a big chunk of its territory are aware of it. A look at the map is revealing. Including the vaunted "West Bank," the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, the entire area of the country is barely over 10,000 square miles. France is twenty times as large as Israel, California fifteen times as large, Syria about seven times as large, and "tiny" Ecuador ten times as large. Israel is so small that its area is less than half the size of San Bernardino County, California; if it were dropped into Lake Michigan it would disappear from sight without a trace. The Arab counties in contrast are huge—they occupy twice the area of the United States. Greater Israel, indeed!

It is clear that the concept of "Greater Israel," lacks any validity and has no basis in fact. To apply such a concept to a country as small as Israel would almost seem a mockery. Obviously, Israel has no territorial ambitions. All it wants is to live in peace within secure and defensible borders, just as any other country and as required under U.N. Resolution No. 242. But it seems that the *size* of Israel, whether "greater" or "lesser" is not at all the concern of Israel's implacable Arab enemies. The very *existence* of Israel, of a Jewish state in their midst of whatever size, is unacceptable to the Arabs. And unless that mindset changes, not until the Arab states have become democracies and have come to full acceptance of Israel, are willing to make *true* peace with it, and are prepared to establish normal and friendly relations with Israel can any possible territorial adjustment be considered. As it looks right now, that may still take some time.

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galleries), the Salk Institute and the National Symphony Orchestra (which had played "Happy Birthday" at his ninetieth birthday in return for a hefty donation)—filed claims against his estate for pledges that he never fulfilled.

Epstein provides numerous examples of Hammer's brand of charity, including the deliciously sinister story behind Hammer's much-heralded gift to the Soviet Union in 1972 of a Goya painting, a "million-dollar gift from my private collection," as he announced. Actually, it was a minor Goya that Hammer had picked up for $60,000. He then transferred ownership to a Zurich-based shell corporation that appeared to be owned by a Liechtenstein foundation but was really controlled by Hammer. Then he had the Armand Hammer Foundation buy the painting from this phony corporation for $160,000, yielding a profit of $100,000. After his foundation donated the "million-dollar" Goya to the Soviet Union, he flew to Leningrad with an attaché full of $100,000 in cash, a bribe for the Soviet Minister of Culture, Yekaterina Furtseva, who in return gave him a major painting by Kazimir Malevich. This he sold to a German buyer for $750,000. The result was that the Hermitage got an inferior (or an oversold) Goya and Hammer was credited with a major gift in the furtherance of world peace while he made a tidy personal profit of three-quarters of a million dollars.

Hammer was evil to the point of camp. He was almost a cartoon villain, a James Bond baddie in a wing chair stroking a cat. There was the mistress he got pregnant, promised to marry as soon as his divorce came through, forced to spy on his wife (even to transcribe the secret tapes!), and then unceremoniously dumped when a more suitable woman came along. At which point he had a couple of men show up at the mistress's house, put the pregnant woman, her dog and her belongings into a station wagon, and drive her to Mexico, where she was given a false identity and married to a Mexican whom she had never seen before, who disappeared right after the ceremony. When their daughter was born, Hammer promised to send a check every month (through a chain of anonymous lawyers), on the condition that the identity of the father never be revealed to the daughter. There was another mistress, Martha Wade Kaufman, whom he hired as his art adviser. When his wife found out about her, he told her that he would fire the woman. Instead, he had Martha change her name to Hilary Gibson and alter her appearance, wearing thick makeup and gray wigs to look much older. Hammer told his wife that he had hired a new art adviser, and the affair continued for years. Both mistresses were promised millions and both were written out of his will just before his death.

Then there was Dorothy Prell, his heroically loyal personal secretary for twenty-six years, at his call seven days a week, who was hospitalized for chronic colitis. (The stress of working for The Doctor was unbearable.) When she came to after surgery she looked up and saw Hammer, a surprise visitor, standing over her hospital bed, announcing that he was going to reward her for her long and faithful service by giving her some good news that would add years to her life: she was fired. "Standing there, looking down at me," she later recalled, "he was the devil incarnate."

Hammer was not exactly a family man. When Frances slipped and fell on a polished floor at a Kremlin reception, badly injuring herself, Hammer left her there in his rush to embrace Gorbachev, who was entering the room. (Frances never returned with him to Moscow.) He had his only son secretly DNA-tested, using a vial of blood furtively taken at the UCLA Medical Center, to which he was a major contributor, so as to determine whether he really was the father. He had a large marble mausoleum built, engraved with the legend THE ARMAND HAMMER FAMILY, and had the graves of his father, mother and two brothers dug up and reinterred there.

As one would expect, he ran Occidental Petroleum in a high Stalinist manner, though he owned less than 1 percent of its stock. He had bugs planted in subordinates' offices and cars; the annual shareholders' meeting was held on his birthday; busts and portraits of himself adorned company headquarters. A vast public-relations wing of the corporation was devoted to enhancing not the image of the company but the image of its chairman. In violation of SEC rules, he required that each director secretly sign an undated letter of resignation. His megalomania was colossal and seems to have been scripted by a B-movie hack: when one of his mistresses asked why he never wanted to be president, he scoffed, "I make presidents." With a keen sense of history, and with no sense of irony, Hammer once boasted to an associate: "There has never been anyone like me. And my likes will never be seen again."

IV.

The most intriguing puzzle of Armand Hammer's life is how he got away with it for so long. That his cover as a Soviet agent in the 1920s and 1930s was never blown (we still don't know if he ceased working for the Soviets by World War II, or continued serving them as a sort of capitalist shill) may be explained by the precautions that he, and the Soviets, took. Epstein says that there was a time in the 1920s when the Soviets were convinced that Hammer had been found out, but in fact they had grossly overestimated the capabilities of Western intelligence.

All his life Hammer diligently created his biography, with hardly anyone bothering to check it against reality. The only biographies of him were ones that he had paid for, from his fraudulent autobiography of 1932 to *The Remarkable Life of Dr. Armand Hammer* by Bob Considine, which appeared in 1974, to the equally fraudulent *Hammer* (1987), his awkward attempt to produce an *Iacocca*. Astoundingly, each of them was well received by ostensibly serious reviewers. Reviewing *Hammer* for *The New York Times Book Review*, Ted Morgan waxed enthusiastic about the Doctor's "enviable, full life" and accepted unquestioningly Hammer's airbrushed account of it. "There was an element of filial piety in Dr. Hammer's fascination with the Soviet Union," Morgan wrote, which began as a "humanitarian endeavor." Morgan's review was complete and utter nonsense, a reiteration of the Hammer fairy tale.

Edward Jay Epstein's impressively researched account benefited enormously from the coincidence of Hammer's death, which liberated his underlings to talk, and the death of the Soviet Union, which led to the opening of certain archives and the accessibility of intelligence sources in Moscow. Having reviewed previously classified documents from both the Soviet Union and the FBI, Epstein has been able to confirm dark truths about Hammer that were only suspected. Indeed, the Hammer that Epstein has exposed is worse than the most pornographically inclined Hammer-watcher might have imagined.

Still, it isn't as if the truth was not out there. So why did the official version prevail? Here I have my own story to tell. Years ago I published a book called *Red Carpet: The Connection Between the Kremlin and America's Most Powerful Businessmen*, in which I reported for the first time certain details of Hammer's links to Soviet intelligence and questioned whether he might have once been a Soviet agent. (I like to think of it as the first biography of Hammer that he didn't pay for.) And my experience in the researching of that book is a fair illustration of why Hammer was so successful at sustaining the illusion.

In 1981, when I was a graduate student at Harvard's Russian Research Center, I secured an interview with Hammer. It

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was to last for an hour—or longer, if "the Doctor" wanted. Hammer was 83 and he exuded a grandfatherly twinkliness. The twinkliness vanished, though, when his phone buzzed and he picked it up, listened intently and rasped, "I want you to cut their balls off," and then slammed the phone down. I had come across Julius Hammer's name in Lenin's collected correspondence, and a few minutes into the interview I innocently asked him about his father's role in founding the American Communist Party. At that point Hammer stood up and said, "All right, that's it. I've got no more time to talk. Interview's over." And he refused all requests for interviews from then on.

And yet he took care to string me along, in order to preserve a record of "cooperation," for legal reasons that I didn't understand at the time. Finally he had one of his PR men contact me with the good news that "the Doctor" would grant me an audience, but only after I interviewed ten prominent "friends" of his, including Louis Nizer, Arthur Groman, Arthur Krim, Jimmy Roosevelt and John Walker of the National Gallery, each of whom could give me "the proper background." The kicker was that one by one, each of these cronies refused to be interviewed. Sensing that I was up to no good, Hammer then contacted my faculty adviser at Harvard and announced that he was prepared to give the Russian Research Center his papers, and to make a hefty donation as well, on the condition that I be ordered to desist. My faculty adviser refused.

On the day that my book was published, there appeared in *The New York Times* an op-ed piece by Louis Nizer concerning a prominent unnamed client of his who had been libeled by a new book. By the law's definition, Nizer said, his client was a public figure. Still, his client was wounded by all the lies. And so, Nizer argued, it was time to change the libel laws; and he intended to file a lawsuit on behalf of this aggrieved client and do whatever he could to change the legal precedent. Hammer never intended to sue me for libel, of course; he could never survive the discovery process, and besides, why give the book all that attention? But the threat worked. My publisher, which was at the time owned by CBS, was cowed, even though the manuscript had been carefully vetted by a libel lawyer. And Hammer, I was told, bought up as many copies of *Red Carpet* as he could, much as the Christian Science Church used to buy up copies of books critical of Mary Baker Eddy. (He was my best customer, and thanks to him the book had what publishers call a very clean sell-through.)

But nothing was as effective in defending Hammer's reputation against historical research than the corps of journalists and commentators who cheered him for political reasons. In those days of détente, Hammer had successfully positioned himself as a "moderate" voice against the "madness" of the arms race and the cold war. Many liberals misguidedly saw Hammer as a soulmate. Here was a high-profile, wheeler-dealer supercapitalist on their side—and a friend of Lenin's to boot! For these people, it was preposterous (worse, it was McCarthyite) to accuse Armand Hammer of having been a Soviet operative. Thus the reviewer of my book in *The Los Angeles Times*, who was associated with the Union of Concerned Scientists, blasted it for its skepticism toward Hammer and his "tireless efforts to improve U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations."

And then there was John Kenneth Galbraith, a member of the American Committee on East-West Accord, to which Hammer was a major contributor. He asked to review my book for *The New York Times Book Review* and there he attempted to bury it. "I, sir, was there," he wrote in tiresome high dudgeon. He went on to criticize *Red Carpet* for refusing to ascribe "serious well-intentioned social or political concern" to Hammer and others who had close dealings with the Kremlin. Galbraith's strictures struck me as rather curious. For I had sought to interview Galbraith during the writing of my book, but he had insisted that he really knew very little about the subject. "I am afraid," he wrote, "that I am simply not a very useful prospect." Surely he must know something? "Alas, I'm not a useful source on the matter." But what, I asked him, about the motivation of these men? "I'm really not useful. My association has been either too formal or too casual and, to my shame, I haven't thought about the motivation." I guess he had time to form an opinion by the time the book appeared.

In its obituary for Hammer, *The Los Angeles Times* called him a "billionaire." In fact, he left an estate of no more than $40 million. After estate taxes, legal bills, outstanding lawsuits, pledges to charities and personal debts were paid, Hammer's estate dwindled to about $750,000. His only heirs, his son and two grandchildren, got about $250,000 each. So if he was so smart, why wasn't he rich? For one thing, his mammoth Soviet deals (fertilizer, superphosphoric acid, natural gas, hotels, all done in the 1970s) were wildly unprofitable. Oxy ran up losses exceeding $2.5 billion in its deals with the communist world, a fact that Hammer concealed with clever accounting. We don't know, and Epstein doesn't tell us, whether Hammer ever expected his big Russian deals to make money, or did them on behalf of the Soviets to lure other Western firms, or for the drama and the attention, or what. The truth seems to be that Hammer only cared about power, about appearances, about himself. Money was only a means to his sordid narcissistic ends.

When he was 92, Hammer decided that he would have a belated bar mitzvah. Needless to say, he orchestrated it in grand autocratic fashion, turning it into a quasi-state celebration, inviting such fabulous guests as Merv Griffin, Ted Turner, Howard Baker, Robert Maxwell, Lee Iacocca, senators and governors. A *New York Times* correspondent named Robert Reinhold hailed "the first public religious expression of Jewish identity for a man who had grown up in the home of socialist parents who spurned the trappings of religion," adding that Hammer "demonstrated his Judaism with acts of generosity rather than devotion." Presumably the reporter didn't know that all his life Hammer had identified himself (and checked himself into hospitals) as a Protestant, or that in 1966, when he feared that his Libyan oil deal might be in trouble because the Libyans had heard that he was a Jew, Hammer suddenly joined the Unitarian Church and sent the Libyans a letter denouncing the "sinister" and "unfounded rumor," the "malicious lie," that he was Jewish and a supporter of Israel.

Then, on December 10, 1990, one day before Armand Hammer's bar mitzvah was to take place, the old con man died. There is a God.

JOSEPH FINDER is the author, most recently, of *The Zero Hour* (Morrow).

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LOS ANGELES DIARIST

Propped up

HERE'S WHAT I DON'T GET ABOUT California. I write on politics for a living. I read four newspapers a day, scan half a dozen political magazines weekly, and would barely notice if everything but CNN and C-SPAN dropped off my cable system. In other words, I'm weird. Yet voting here for the first time last month, in the ballot proposition capital of the universe, I didn't have a clue what most of this year's fifteen state measures were about. I can't believe I'm alone. Which raises two questions: How in the world are people expected to vote on all this? And what ever happened to *representative* democracy anyway?

OF COURSE I HAD A FEEL FOR THE biggies, like proposition 209, the anti-affirmative action California Civil Rights Initiative. And 210, which raised the minimum wage faster and higher than the recent federal hike, was straightforward. But, beyond that, I felt paralyzed. No doubt some medicinal uses for marijuana make sense (215)—but who knows what fresh hell lurks down that slippery slope? Reinstating a top tax bracket (217) sounds progressive, but state income taxes are already sky-high. The explanatory squibs on the sample ballot they sent out only further clouded things. Take 207. It "prohibit[ed] attorneys from charging excessive fees" (good), but also "prohibit[ed] restrictions on the right to negotiate the amount of attorneys' fees" (suspicious). Dueling props 214 and 216 cracked down on evil HMOs, but it was impossible to tell how they differed or if either was wise. Then there was the "Veterans' Bond Act of 1996"—a good idea? How should I know? Prepping to be a proper California voter looked like a serious lifestyle choice, like the kind of commitment you know you'd have to make to optimize all those frequent flyer offers. Wasn't there someone I could hire to look into this for me, like a politician? Presuming that my own pique mirrored statewide opinion, I figured most of my fellow Californians simply skipped this stuff altogether. But no: it turns out ballot measures get about as many votes as governors, senators and presidents; and pundits back east regularly cite the outcome of California ballot propositions as evidence of mighty tides of opinion about to sweep across the rest of the country and remake American politics (and with enough punditry, it sometimes even happens).

THE DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION saw a wave of ads bankrolled by trial lawyers, unions and other bigshots eager to bypass Sacramento's stasis and buy their policy retail: more proof that unintended consequences rule the world. This wasn't what California's famous progressive-era governor, Hiram Johnson, had in mind when he introduced the ballot initiative in 1911. Then it was a populist move to wrest power from the hands of the railroad-dominated state legislature, a kind of *Mr. Smith Goes to Sacramento.* Today's proposition wars look more like a scene that didn't make the final edit of Steve Martin's *L.A. Story.* While Angelenos inch along miles of clogged freeways, the car radio serves up a strange staccato symphony of "Yes!" and "No!" and "Yes!" and "No!" on "two-oh-four-oh-eight-oh-nine." Only one ad broke through with a slogan you couldn't shake: "9-1-1 could save your life. Proposition 2-1-1 could save your life's savings." (Don't ask how—it lost.) I thought newspaper endorsements might help me shortcut the hard work of citizenship, but my Inner Contrarian took over. After all, the press missed the Savings and Loan crisis; how could I be sure that if I looked into county finance or prison construction I wouldn't come down differently from my local newspaper editors? Other supporters didn't clinch things, either. When the clean government fanatics at Common Cause stand behind one campaign finance measure and clean-government maniac Jerry Brown backs its rival, you're pretty much on your own (or at sea: in 1988, Californians approved two measures that simultaneously provided and banned public funding for campaigns). It's one thing to pick a candidate like you pick a detergent or a running shoe. But to make actual policy this way takes democracy a leap of faith too far. You'd have to be nuts, I kept thinking, to cast a vote based on this circus. Then my wife told me that's exactly what she was doing.

AS IT HAPPENS, OUR MARRIAGE IS a nice window onto an enduring democratic dilemma. I'm the champion of representation, who expects elected officials to handle things I know nothing about and resents the buck being passed to me. Jody, the romantic democrat, says her uninformed vote is as good as anybody else's. She listens to the ads, picks up what she can from the papers, and then, like any freshman congressman, takes her cue from like-minded experts and votes. The more she explained how easy this was for her, the more I wondered whether I'd thrown my life away on a terrible mistake. I don't mean Jody; I mean political journalism. What use is my craft, I sulked, if there's no public habit of deliberation, no market for analysis that helps make our collective decisions rational? Nothing new in this lament, I know; but California's proposition fever made my deepest fears of personal futility surge to the surface. Maybe trying to clarify the stakes on public issues isn't the noble endeavor I'd imagined; maybe, in the age of television, it simply misses the point. If Lincoln and Douglas reprised their debates today, is it so clear that all their words, and a thousand reporters' parsing of them, would add up to more voter insight than the impression that "the tall guy seems thoughtful" or "the twerp can't stop sweating"? Maybe the whole word-peddling machine, decked out in First Amendment finery and cloaked in pretensions of relevance, is a sham. "Proposition 218 on last week's ballot," went the tease for "Which Way L.A.?," the city's best public affairs program, capturing my postmortem blues: "Did you vote for it or against it—*and what did you think it would do?*"

SO THERE I WAS IN THE VOTING booth at Marquez Elementary School. It only took a minute to punch the ticket for my lesser-evil candidates (we don't pull levers in California). Then came the ballot measures. I punched "no" on 209, "yes" on the minimum wage, and was about to call it a day when 204, "The Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act," caught my eye. I haven't the faintest idea what it does. I've seen things called the Alliance for Environmental Stewardship turn out to be a strip miners' trade group. Yet, in my mind's eye, I suddenly saw the ad with the names of what seemed to be dozens of newspapers and civic groups who endorsed the act floating across a blue field. Yielding to an impulse I can't fully describe or defend, I punched "yes." It turns out I'm a romantic. I still feel a little funny about it.

MATTHEW MILLER

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"Made in the U.S.A." Sells in Japan

Without a lot of fanfare, U.S. products from construction materials to computer chips have been carving out significant markets in Japan recently. What's behind this trend, which helped boost U.S. exports to Japan by 20.3% to over $75 billion last year?

A combination of things: Deregulation...import promotion and market-opening measures...favorable exchange rates...changing lifestyles, especially among Japanese baby boomers (one result: imports of U.S. furniture and bedding jumped to $385 million in 1995 from $171 million in 1993)...and the fact that U.S. companies are targeting their products specifically for Japanese markets. For example, U.S. vehicles sold in Japan now have the steering wheel on the right side, to accommodate the fact that Japanese drive on the "other" side of the road.

Japan isn't America, of course, but all of these changes are having an impact. Japanese buy American rock tapes and CDs at Tower Records; drink Coke (the #1 carbonated beverage in Japan, sold in more than 820,000 vending machines); buy casual clothes at Eddie Bauer and L.L. Bean, whose reputation for excellence has made them market leaders in Japan; and purchase toys at Toys "R" Us, which boasts 37 stores in Japan and plans to open an average of 10 new stores a year there.

In the high-tech area, a sharp increase in the sales of U.S. computers and related equipment such as computer chips have resulted in broad market gains; U.S.-manufactured PCs, for example, have about 30% of the Japanese computer market; and Windows 95, the latest software package from Microsoft, is a best seller there.

All of this is good for the U.S. But it's also good for Japanese consumers, who, like American consumers, increasingly demand more value for their money. They're getting it with a broad range of U.S. products that combine high quality and attractive prices.

Japan Business Information Center
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